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ABSTRACT

Suggesting that a good character can be a child's most important safeguard against life's vicissitudes, this book for 7- to 10-year-olds with accompanying leader's guide for adults helps children understand that their choices make a difference, that every child has what it takes to be his or her best, and that learning how to strengthen character muscles can be fun. The 11-chapter children's book introduces the concept of character development and covers the following 10 areas: (1) caring; (2) citizenship; (3) cooperation; (4) fairness; (5) forgiveness; (6) honesty; (7) relationships with family and friends; (8) respect; (9) responsibility; and (10) safety. The book features self-quizzes that help children identify their character strengths and weaknesses, and includes cartoons, suggested readings, practical advice, and inspiring stories of children who are at their best when they reach out or stand up for what they believe in. The accompanying leader's guide is directed to educators and parents, and includes activities, questions, reproducible pages, resources, quotations, definitions, and a glossary, all of which reinforce and expand the character lessons. The format of the lessons in the leader's guide closely follows the elements of the chapters in the children's book: (1) reading review, including questions that facilitate a discussion of a character trait; (2) character dilemmas, providing discussion and role-playing ideas; (3) instructions for activities from the children's book; (4) additional group activities not provided in the children's book; (5) resources, including books and organizations of interest; and (6) looking ahead, providing suggestions for checking children's progress, and planning for the next lesson. (KB)

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Being Your Best: Character Building for Kids 7-10 [and] Leader's Guide

Barbara A. Lewis

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BEING YOUR BEST

Character Building for Kids 7–10

Barbara A. Lewis

CARING
CITIZENSHIP
COOPERATION
FAIRNESS
FORGIVENESS
HONESTY
RELATIONSHIPS
RESPECT
RESPONSIBILITY
SAFETY

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BEING YOUR BEST

Character Building for Kids 7–10

Barbara A. Lewis

Edited by Marjorie Lisovskis

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Works for kids®

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Dedication

To Sam, who has always had a soft heart.

Acknowledgments

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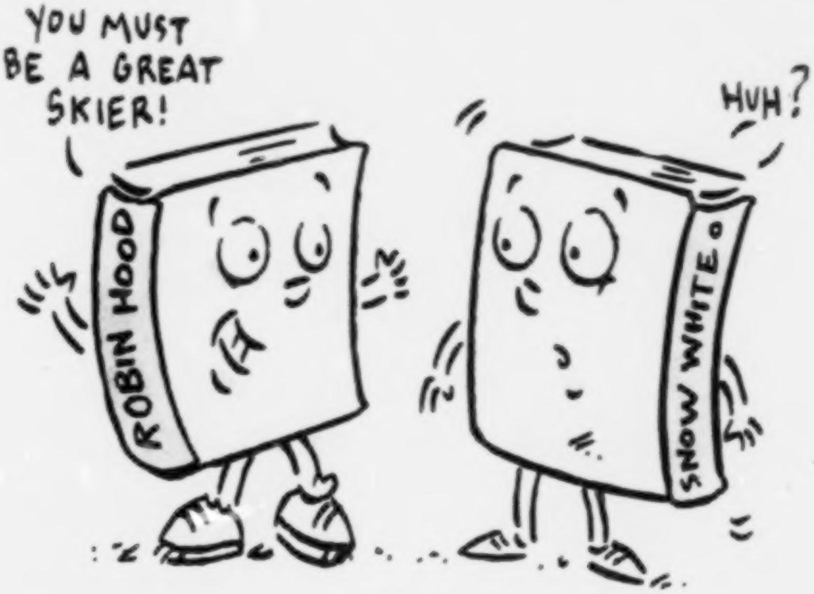
What's Character, and Why Do People Need It?

"I still want what I've always wanted . . .
to be the best person I can be."
—*Oprah Winfrey*

Have you ever heard someone say, "You can't judge a book by its cover"? What this means is that you can't tell what happens in a book without reading all the words inside. Sometimes the cover only shows a small part of what happens in the story. Sometimes it really isn't much like the story at all.


YOU MUST BE A GREAT SKIER!
HUH?
ROBIN HOOD
SNOW WHITE

Now think about *you*. Are you like that book? When people see the *outside* you, do they know everything about

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you? No, they don't. You have thoughts and feelings inside. Looking at the outside, people can't see what's in your mind and heart. They'd be mistaken if they thought they knew.

Have you ever had a teacher with a stern face who seemed unfriendly at first? Then, when you got to know her, you learned she was a very friendly, caring person inside? Her "cover" was different from the way she was inside.

This book is about the inside you—your **character.** Character means having positive qualities like caring, fairness, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We call these qualities **character traits.** This book can help you discover the positive qualities inside you. It can help you learn how to make them stronger.

What would it be like if people didn't share? If they weren't kind or honest? If they couldn't work together? If they didn't follow laws and rules? The world would be a pretty mean and lonesome place. That's one reason we have rules for living together. Strong character helps people follow the rules. But there's more to it than that. When you're caring, honest, and responsible, people respect you more. Best of all, you respect and feel proud of *yourself.* Just think about how good it feels when you share, treat someone kindly, tell the truth, or finish a job or chore.

There are many character traits you can develop. In this book, we'll talk about ten of them: *caring, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, forgiveness, honesty, relationships with family and friends, respect, responsibility,* and *safety.* (If you're not sure right now what each of these traits is, don't worry—you'll find out as you read.)

You don't have to be perfect. Developing strong character traits isn't easy. It takes a lifetime of courage and hard work. Now is a good time to start that work, and this book will help you. Think of it as your guide to becoming the very best person that you can be!

How to Use This Book

Being Your Best is about character. The first chapter asks you to think about yourself. What is your character like? What's important to you? How well do you know yourself? Short checklists help you to decide which character traits to work on first.

Each of the remaining chapters helps you think about one positive trait. At the beginning of every chapter is a true story about a kid (or kids) who had an important experience with that character trait. You'll meet children of different ages, backgrounds, beliefs, interests, and talents. Some of them did amazing things—like Lawrence Champagne III, who saved a busload of kids. Others did kind acts—like Kanesha Sonee Johnson, who helped her classmates get along better, or Zach Zirkle, who stood up to bullies to save his brother.

Following each story, you'll read a short section that tells about the character trait in more detail. Within the chapter, you'll find quotes to get you thinking. Definitions and other background information help you understand more about the trait and why it's important. Words you need to know are highlighted in **bold** type the first time they're used, and they're explained in the chapter where they're introduced. They're also defined in the glossary (pages 153–155). As you continue reading, use the glossary to check or recheck the meaning of words.

The chapters offer ideas for you to think and talk about. Each includes a section called "What If?" which describes situations where the best choice isn't always clear. Take some time to think about these situations. You might also want to write about them, talk about them with friends and family, or even **role-play** them (act them out). They'll help you learn more about developing good character.

When you talk about the "What If?" situations with other people, it might help to keep these guidelines in mind:

- **First, get the facts.** Have someone read the situation out loud. Then summarize what you all heard.
- **Listen to everyone's ideas.** Ask questions if you don't understand.
- **Borrow and build on other people's ideas.** This isn't stealing ideas—it's making them stronger. For example, if someone says, "I think the girl should talk to her teacher," someone else might say, "To the teacher or another grown-up."
- **Disagree respectfully.** Name-calling, put-downs, and bad language aren't respectful. You might say, "I understand what you mean, but maybe this would work better."
- **Remember that sometimes there might be more than one right answer.**

Each chapter has three or four activities you can do to build and practice the trait you're learning about. You'll also learn where to find books, Web sites, and organizations with more information about the traits.

You might decide to work on one character trait for a day, a week, or a month. Maybe you'll work on the traits in order, or maybe you'll jump around. Or you might dip into the book and read the parts that interest you the most. It's up to you.

I'd like to know how *Being Your Best* has helped you. Like the children in this book, you might have a story to tell. If you want to share it, please write to me:

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GETTING TO KNOW YOU

"You are your most valuable asset. Don't forget that.
***You* are the best thing you have."**
—Gary Paulsen

When you look in a mirror, you see your outside self. What do you see when you look *inside* yourself? Maybe you see someone who's often kind, fair, friendly, and responsible. Maybe you see someone who can sometimes be crabby, or selfish, or forgetful. Or maybe you see someone with a little bit of both kinds of traits. Whatever you see, it's important for you to do two things:

1. Accept and like who and what you are. You know you're not perfect. Nobody is! You also know you have lots of good qualities. You can value yourself for the unique person that is *you*. To do this, you may want to learn about some of the things that make you a special person.

2. Work to develop stronger character "muscles." Your body needs strong muscles to help you walk, run, climb, jump, or lift. Character traits are like muscles. They can help you be more responsible, make good choices, and get along with other people. You can work to make your character muscles stronger. As you do, you might see some changes in your relationships. Maybe you'll begin to get along better with your friends, family, and teachers. You might start to make new friends. You'll probably do better in school. Most important, you'll feel better about yourself.

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**"Nobody will think you're somebody,
if you don't think so yourself."**
—African-American proverb

Start by Quizzing Yourself

Each of the next ten chapters of this book shows you ways to build your character muscles. Before you start, take some time to get to know who you are and what you're like today. On pages 7–11 are four quizzes you can give yourself. The quizzes aren't hard—in fact, they're fun—and there are no wrong answers. You can use the quizzes to discover things about the *inside* you. You'll learn about your beliefs and feelings, your relationships, and your interests, talents, and dreams. Every quiz tells what page to look at to learn what your answers mean. After taking each quiz, read that explanation. Think about what it means for you. Use what you learn to help you decide which character trait you want to work on first.

CHARACTER MUSCLES

My Character Muscles

Copy this page. Read each pair of sentences. Check the ONE from each pair that describes you. Or check BOTH if you believe that you already have that trait but would like to make it stronger. **To learn what your answers mean, see page 12.**

1.	_____ I'm kind and I care about helping others.	_____ I'd like to be more kind and caring.
2.	_____ I'm a good citizen. I like to help in my school, family, and community.	_____ I want to be a better citizen. I want to help more in my school, family, or community.
3.	_____ I take turns and cooperate with others.	_____ Sometimes I don't like to take turns or cooperate with others.
4.	_____ I'm fair with others, and I'm willing to share.	_____ I usually only treat people fairly if I like them. I don't like to share.
5.	_____ I forgive people easily.	_____ It's hard for me to forgive people. Sometimes I hold a grudge.
6.	_____ I tell the truth most of the time.	_____ I often tell lies.
7.	_____ I get along with my family and friends.	_____ I argue and fight sometimes.
8.	_____ I'm polite and I show respect for everyone.	_____ Sometimes I interrupt, act rude, call people names, or make fun of people.
9.	_____ I'm responsible. I do my chores and homework.	_____ I don't always do my chores and homework.
10.	_____ I play safely and try to keep myself and others safe.	_____ I don't always play safely. Sometimes I take dangerous risks.

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My Family and Friends

Copy this page. For each sentence, check the box that best describes how you feel about your relationships.
To learn what your answers mean, see page 13.

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never or hardly ever
1. My friends like me.			
2. I like my friends.			
3. My parent(s) or guardian(s) listen to me when I talk.			
4. I listen to my parent(s) or guardian(s) when they talk to me.			
5. My friends have fun with me.			
6. I like my teacher(s).			
7. My teacher(s) like me.			
8. I like my brother(s) and sister(s). They don't bug me very much.			
9. My family and I share chores and work together.			
10. I think all people are important.			
11. My friends admire me and can count on me.			
12. It's easy for me to talk to younger kids.			
13. Younger kids like me.			
14. I like to talk with older people.			
15. Older people like me.			

Count the number of checks in each column and write the numbers below.

Number of **"Most of the time"** responses: _____

Number of **"Some of the time"** responses: _____

Number of **"Never or hardly ever"** responses: _____

TOTAL: _____

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What's My Personal Style?

Copy this page. Read the following descriptions. Check the ONE that sounds the most like you. **To learn what your answer means, see page 13.**

____ **1. I like to be alone much of the time.** I like other people, but I mostly like to play by myself. I like to be the one to choose what I do and play. I like doing my own work more than working in a group. I have one or two best friends who I like to be with the most.

____ **2. I like to be with people most of the time.** I like working in groups rather than working alone. I like to make choices in a group. I have many friends. I have best friends, but I like being with all of my friends. I often get bored when I'm alone.

____ **3. I sometimes like to work in a group, but I also like to do my own work.** Sometimes I like to be alone with no one around but me. At other times, I like to play with a whole group of kids. I have friends and like being with them, but I don't mind being alone.

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A Snapshot of Me

What you are on the outside and who you are on the inside combine to make up the real you. Copy and fill in these pages. Use extra paper if you need to. When you're done, you'll have a more complete picture of the person you are right now. Think of it as a snapshot of *you* today. **To learn what your answers mean, see page 14.**

Here's what I look like:

(Draw a picture of yourself here, or paste in a photo.)

1. Things I like about myself are: ____________________

____

2. My best character traits are: ____________________

____

3. Traits I want to make stronger are: ____________________

____

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4. For me, making and keeping friends is:

_____ mostly hard _____ mostly easy _____ sometimes hard and sometimes easy

5. For me, getting along with my family is:

_____ mostly hard _____ mostly easy _____ sometimes hard and sometimes easy

6. I work better:

_____ alone _____ in a group _____ both ways

7. A special talent I want to develop is: ____________________

8. My secret goal is: ____________________

9. When I think about the future, here's what I want to be like: ____________________

10. Steps I can take to reach my goals are: ____________________

20

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What the Quizzes Tell You

For each quiz, look at your responses. Then read the following explanations to learn what your responses may mean. Keep this in mind: The quizzes are meant to help you know yourself better. Nobody is *one* way *all* of the time. Still, you can learn things about yourself and your character by looking at your responses and thinking about what they could mean.

My Character Muscles (see page 7)

Look at the right-hand column on the quiz. Did you put any checks in that column? These checks tell you the character traits you need to build.

If you checked the right-hand column for this number . . .	**. . . you need to build this character trait.**
1	**CARING**
2	**CITIZENSHIP**
3	**COOPERATION**
4	**FAIRNESS**
5	**FORGIVENESS**
6	**HONESTY**
7	**RELATIONSHIPS**
8	**RESPECT**
9	**RESPONSIBILITY**
10	**SAFETY**

Decide which trait you want to work on first. Look it up in the contents and turn to that chapter. You'll find all kinds of ideas to help you build that trait.

My Family and Friends (see page 8)

Which column has the most checks?

If you have 11–15 "Most of the time" checks, you probably get along pretty well with your family and friends. You might enjoy reading the chapter on "Relationships" (it starts on page 90) and doing some of the activities.

If you have 6–10 "Most of the time" checks, you probably get along with your friends and family some, but not most, of the time. You'll probably find it helpful to read the chapter on "Relationships."

If you have 0–5 "Most of the time" checks, you'll want to work on the "Relationships" chapter. It can help you find ways to get along better and be happier.

What's My Personal Style? (see page 9)

For this quiz, there's no "right" answer. Still, each style means something. Knowing your style may help you choose which chapter or chapters you most want to work on.

If you checked 1, you're a person who likes to be alone. You probably work well when left to do a job by yourself. Most likely, you're pretty at ease with yourself. You may not care too much about what other people think. In other words, you're independent.

This is a good way to be. It may make a difference, though, in how you get along with people. Maybe you'll want to find some ways to work with others more easily. If that's how you feel, take a look at these chapters: "Caring" (beginning on page 17), "Cooperation" (page 41), and "Relationships" (page 90).

IMPORTANT!

Being independent isn't the same as being alone and unhappy. If you *never* want to be with other people, or if you feel lonely a lot of the time, share these feelings with a grown-up. You might talk with a parent or guardian, a teacher, the school counselor, or an adult at your place of worship. Find someone you trust and ask for help.

If you checked 2, you're probably a very friendly person, one who's happiest around other people. This is a good way to be, too. Since you seem to prefer to work with others, you might like to start with one of these chapters: "Citizenship" (beginning on page 28), "Cooperation" (page 41), "Respect" (page 107), or "Responsibility" (page 120).

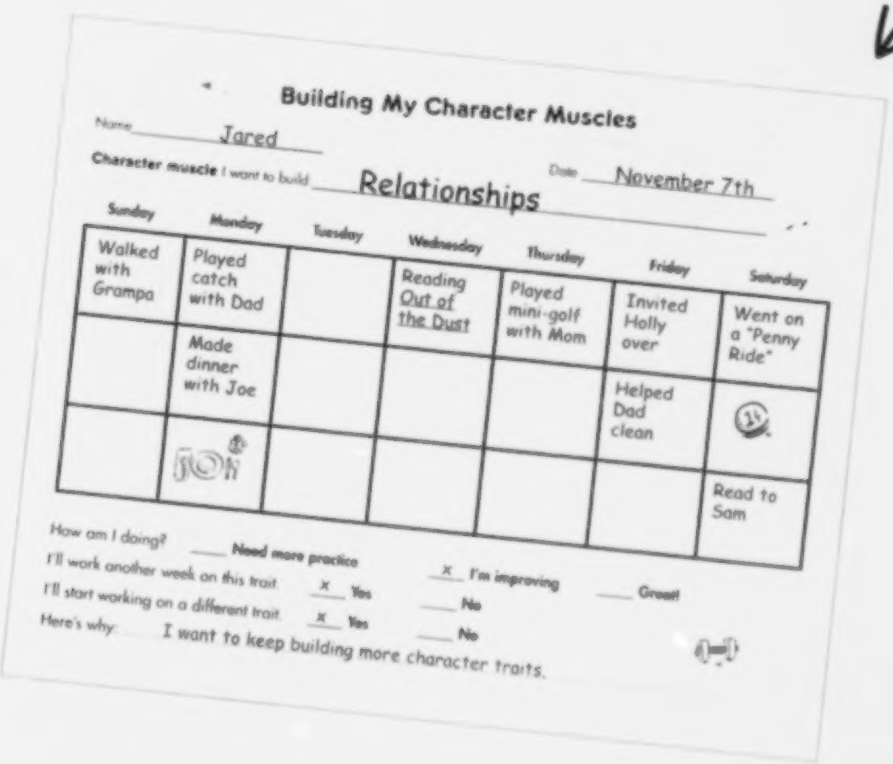
If you checked 3, you're somewhere in between—a mix of independent and friendly. You like both being alone and working or playing in groups. This is a good way to be, too. You might want to begin with any chapter that interests you.

A Snapshot of Me (see pages 10–11)

There are no right or wrong answers for this page, either. Use your answers to help you choose which character traits to work on. You might want to complete "A Snapshot of Me" again in a few months, or even a few years from now. It will be interesting to see what character muscles you've built and how your goals and interests have changed.

What's Next?

You've finished the quizzes and thought about the character traits. Now it's time to start building your character muscles. Decide which trait you want to begin with, look in the contents to find it, and turn to the chapter for that trait. (If you just can't decide, go ahead and start with the first trait, "Caring.") Make a copy of the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (on page 16) and write the name of the muscle (trait) you'll be working on first. (If you want to work on more than one at a time, make extra copies of the page.) Use the chart to keep track of how you're doing day by day. Let's begin!



Building My Character Muscles

Name Jared

Character muscle I want to build Relationships

Date November 7th

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Walked with Grampa	Played catch with Dad		Reading Out of the Dust	Played mini-golf with Mom	Invited Holly over	Went on a "Penny Ride"
	Made dinner with Joe				Helped Dad clean	
						Read to Sam

How am I doing? ___ **Need more practice** _x_ **I'm improving** ___ **Great!**

I'll work another week on this trait. _x_ **Yes** ___ **No**

I'll start working on a different trait. _x_ **Yes** ___ **No**

Here's why: I want to keep building more character traits.

Sample of a completed "Building My Character Muscles" chart

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Building My Character Muscles

Name ______________________ Date ______________

Character muscle I want to build: ______________________

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

How am I doing? ____ **Need more practice** ____ **I'm improving** ____ **Great!**

I'll work another week on this trait. ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

I'll start working on a different trait. ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

Here's why: ______________________

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Taylor Meehan fixing sandwiches for the Salvation Army Community Dining Room

Someone Who Cares

Taylor Meehan and a New Pair of Shoes
Park City, Utah

Eleven-year-old Taylor Meehan and his mother serve sandwiches at the Salvation Army Community Dining Room in Salt Lake City, Utah. Once a month, they drive into the city to make and serve sandwiches to hundreds of homeless people. Many of the people have families with small children.

On a frosty night in January, the wind wailed and whirled snow through the open door of the dining room as 600 people lined up. Taylor carried trays back and forth between the kitchen and the serving table. He spoke with a man who was shivering in a thin, wet sweatshirt. The man shuffled his feet because his shoes were too small. Taylor ran to the back warehouse to hunt for extra shoes, but there weren't any. All he could find was a pair of ladies' fuzzy pink slippers.

Taylor hurried back into the dining hall. Even though the floor oozed with mud from wet boots and shoes, he knelt down next to the shivering man. Laughing, he stuck his own big feet out and pressed them against the stranger's. "Mine are the same size as yours," Taylor shouted above the noisy voices. The man smiled back from behind a thick mustache.

Gently, Taylor pulled off the man's wet shoes. The bottom of one shoe flapped loosely away from the top. Taylor placed the worn shoes on the floor. Then he took off his own new shoes and dry socks. He held one of the socks to his nose. "Whew!" he exclaimed, wiggling his nose. The man laughed.

Taylor felt the icy cold of the man's feet as he pulled the dry socks onto them. He carefully guided the man's stiff feet into the warm shoes. The man rubbed his eyes and spoke to him in Spanish. He placed his hand softly on Taylor's shoulder.

Taylor bounced up, grinning. He looked down at his own pink toes in the puddles of muddy water and laughed. He walked over to his mom. "Are you mad at me, Mom?" he asked, knowing he had just given away his new basketball shoes.

But his mom didn't look mad. She looked happy, and her eyes were wet. She shook her head and hugged Taylor so tight he thought she'd squish the stuffings out of him. "How could I be mad at such a kind thing?" she exclaimed. "But guess what, Mr. Taylor," Mom added with a chuckle. "You get to wear the fuzzy pink slippers till I can take you to a store!"

Caring—What Does It Mean?

"What's important in life is how we treat each other."
—Hana Ivanhoe, 15

One day a large mourning dove flew into a window in our home. He fell in a heap of feathers to the deck and didn't move. Suddenly, another dove swooped down to the fallen bird. The second dove began cooing and swinging her head back and forth. She stayed with the first bird for about twenty minutes, coaxing it. Then the large dove stood up on his feet. The smaller bird's voice changed to a sharp chirp that sounded like scolding. She hopped two feet away and chirped until the big dove finally ruffled his feathers and flew off with his mate. By staying and helping her mate, the second dove seemed to show that she cared about him.

Caring is about how we treat each other. Showing concern, being kind, sharing, helping, and giving are all ways that we show we care. If you share your candy bar with your little brother or help your dad clean up the kitchen, you're showing that you care. If you pick up all the scraps of paper off the floor of your classroom, you're showing your teacher that you care. You show your grandmother you care when you sit on the floor so she can have your chair. You show your neighbors you care when you take their newspaper up to their door or shovel their snow.

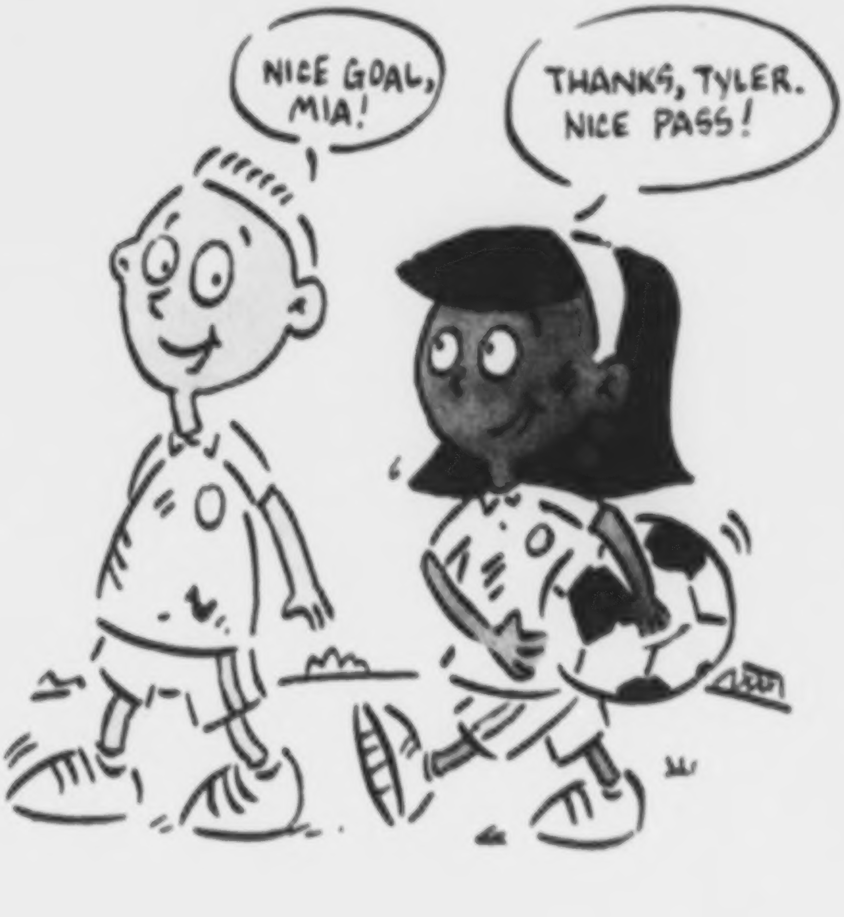
Every day there are hundreds of ways you can show you care. And one of the nicest things about caring for others is that they're likely to be kind to *you* in return.

"That's not so," you might say. "I let my friend borrow my bike, and she bent the fenders. She didn't even say she was sorry!"

It's true that people won't *always* treat you in the same caring way you treat them. But over time, you'll find that friends, family, and teachers will usually appreciate your kind actions and show kindness back to you.

Suppose you threw a beach ball into the ocean. The ball would return to you, no matter how hard or far you threw it. Those waves would keep rolling in, and before you knew it, your beach ball would come bobbing back to shore.

Kind words and actions are like that. You toss them out, and before you know it, someone says or does something to show that he or she cares about *you.* Caring makes the world a better place for everyone.


NICE GOAL, MIA!
THANKS, TYLER. NICE PASS!

How Can You Show That You Care?

There are many ways you can show others that you care about them. Four important ways are through your words, actions, thoughts, and gifts.

Caring Words

You can say kind things to other people, even people you don't like very much. You might be wondering, "Why should I say something nice to someone I don't like?" Often, when we think we don't like someone, the truth is that we don't like something the person does or a certain thing about the person. Most people want to be liked. If you can think of something nice to say, maybe you'll be surprised. The person might say something kind back to *you*.

There are other ways to show caring with words. You can listen to someone who's sad and say "I know how you feel." You can see that a friend is excited and say "Wow! I'm so happy for you!" You can give someone a compliment.

Sometimes the kindest words are the ones you *don't* say. Don't talk about people behind their backs. Don't spread rumors or tell mean stories—even if you think they're true. Think about how you would feel if someone said mean things about you.

Caring Actions

You can help and you can share. You might make your sister's bed. You might help someone who's struggling with homework. When you feed your friend's gerbil while her family is on vacation, you show you care about animals and your friend. Sharing your popcorn, your toys, and your time shows that you care, too.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

—Aesop's Fables

Caring Thoughts

Thinking good things about other people can help them, because they might feel the kind thoughts you send their way. And caring thoughts can lead to caring actions: What you think about is often what you do. Kind thoughts about someone else can help *you,* too. When you think good thoughts about a person, it helps you feel more happy and peaceful inside.

Try it and see. Maybe you feel a little jealous because your friend has lots of toys and games, and you don't. Don't make yourself more jealous by thinking grumpy thoughts like "That's not fair!" or "He's so lucky—how come I'm not?" Instead, think of what you like about your friend. You might think, "He's a good friend—he saves me a seat on the bus." Or, "He usually shares his games. It's nice to have such a thoughtful friend."

Caring Gifts

You can buy gifts, but often the ones you make are an even better way to show that you care. You might make a card for your cousin. Or you could give the clean, warm mittens and coat that don't fit you anymore to a shelter. Maybe you and your mom can help plant a tree in your neighbor's front yard—that would be a gift for everyone who walked or rode by. You don't have to give gifts just on birthdays or holidays. Give when you're in the mood—and when you're not. Remember, when you do something kind, it can make you feel good inside. You might be in a better mood after you give someone a gift.

6 WAYS TO GROW IN CARING

Care about others. Be kind, helpful, and sharing.

Ask about other people. Be a good listener.

Respect all people, property, animals, and the earth.

Include others. Watch to see if anyone feels lonely or left out, and include that person.

Never hold a grudge. Forgive others, and they will probably forgive you, too.

Give to others. Help other people feel good, learn, and grow.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. Your brother never puts his toy trucks away, so you decide to do something nice for him. You start to put his trucks away every night before you go to bed. You're doing something kind for your brother, but are you really helping him? Why or why not? What is another way to show you care?

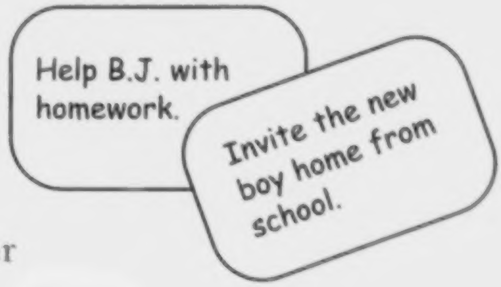
2. You have a friend who doesn't like to share her toys with you. Do you let her play with *your* toys? What might you do to help your friend and also show you care?

3. A new family has moved to your neighborhood from another country. They had to leave most of their possessions in their old home, so the kids have very few clothes. You want to show the newcomers that you care. You try to give some of your clothes to a girl in the family who's about your age. She shakes her head no and turns away from you. Why do you think she does that? How might you help this family understand that you care about them?

More Ways to Show Caring

Here are some activities you can do to show other people that you care about them.

Make Kindness Cards


Help B.J. with homework.
Invite the new boy home from school.

Here's what you'll need:

- File cards or paper and scissors
- Pen or fine-line marker
- Shoe box
- *If you wish:* Materials for decorating the box (such as construction or wrapping paper, glue stick, markers, ribbon, and yarn)

Make kindness cards with ideas of kind things you can do for your family and friends. Write a kind act on each file card. (If you use paper, cut the paper into strips to write on.) Write as many kind acts as you can think of. Put the cards in a box. Decorate and label the box if you want to. Every morning, take a kindness card from the box. During the day, try to do that kind act at least once. Keep adding new cards to the box when you think of other kind acts to do.

Here are some ideas for kind acts. You can think of more.

At home:

- Empty the wastebasket.
- Read to your younger sister.
- Let someone else choose a TV show.
- Help your grandpa shine his shoes.
- Tell your brother you love him.

At school:

- Smile at someone you don't know.
- Sit with someone you don't like very well and try to get to know the person better.
- Say "Good job!" to someone who throws, catches, or runs well.
- Share your pencil or paper.
- Offer to straighten the books on the bookshelf.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here's a book that will give you lots of ideas about kind deeds you can do for others:

Kids' Random Acts of Kindness **by the editors of Conari Press (Emeryville, CA: Conari Press, 1994). Kids from around the world tell their own stories of kind acts.**

Plan and Do a Service

A kind act that we do for someone else is called a **service.** You can do a service for someone in your neighborhood or school. Think of a person you might like to do something nice for. It could be a good friend or a person you don't know very well. You might collect used clothes from your friends and donate them to a family shelter. Maybe you have a neighbor who'd like a regular visitor. Decide who you'd like to do something kind for. Check with your dad or mom to be sure it's okay. Then do it!

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IMPORTANT!
Always ask your mom or dad first before you do a service for someone. At school, always ask your teacher.

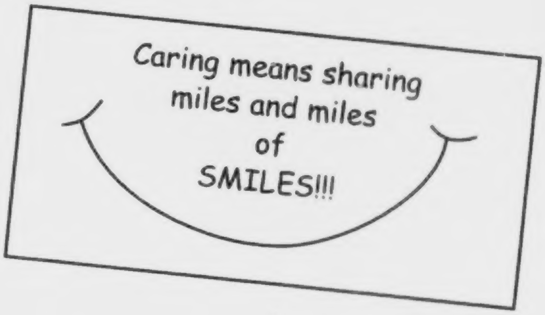
Write a Poem About Caring

Here's one poem about caring:

Caring means saying nice things to others:
My mother, my father, my sisters, my brothers,
My neighbors, my teachers, my friends near and far.
Caring shows people how special they are.

Write your own poem about caring. You might start with a certain word, like *caring, kind, helping, giving,* or *sharing*. Write your poem any way you'd like—it doesn't have to rhyme. If you want a little help getting started, you can begin your poem with one of these lines:

I find when I'm kind . . .
To share shows I care . . .
Caring means . . .
Caring shows others . . .
When I show that I care . . .
When I help others . . .
I like to give gifts . . .



You might want to hang your poem over your bed or give it to someone you care about. You could even turn it into a song.

Care for the Environment

The **environment** is the world around you. It's the home you live in, the streets you walk on, and the classrooms and halls in your school. It's the air you breathe, the lakes or rivers you swim in, the trees you climb, and the prairie or desert you like to explore.

Talk to your family and friends about ways you can care for the environment. Together, you can do a lot to help keep the world clean and safe for everyone. Here are some things you can do:

- Collect cans, bottles, and plastic containers for recycling.
- Make gift wrap out of old newspapers.
- Pick up litter along a highway or clean up an empty lot. (Be sure to do these activities with an adult.)
- Plant a garden or a tree.
- Find a home for an animal that needs one.

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Read Stories About Caring

Charlotte's Web by E.B. White (New York: Harper & Row, 1952). A spider cares for a pig and saves his life. Ages 7–11.

The Life and Times of Mother Teresa by Tanya Rice (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House, 1998). Read about this caring Catholic nun who received the Nobel Prize for her work with sick and poor people in India and other places in the world. Ages 9–12.

The Music of Dolphins by Karen Hesse (New York: Scholastic, 1996). Mila is rescued off the coast of Florida after having been raised by dolphins. The more she learns of unkindness among human beings, the more she longs for her ocean home among the dolphins. Ages 7–11.

Out of Darkness: The Story of Louis Braille by Russell Freedman (New York: Clarion Books, 1997). A biography of nineteenth-century Frenchman Louis Braille. When he was three years old, Braille lost his sight. He went on to develop a system of raised dots on paper (the Braille System) that makes it possible for people who are blind to read and write. Ages 8–12.

Aubyn C. Burnside surrounded by piles of donated suitcases

Someone Who's a Good Citizen

Aubyn C. Burnside and Suitcases for Kids
Hickory, North Carolina

Foster children are kids who can't live with the parents they were born or adopted to. Instead, they live in families where **foster parents** take care of them.

In 1996, when Aubyn Burnside was eleven years old, she decided that **foster children** needed her help. Her older sister Leslie worked with some foster kids. Leslie told Aubyn that many foster children have to move from one family to another. Aubyn felt sad when she thought about the kids who kept having to move. She thought the kids were being blown around like tumbleweeds. Leslie told her that some kids move as many as seven times while they're in foster care.

"Foster kids don't usually have suitcases," Aubyn's sister told her. "They have to grab anything they can find to pack their things in. Usually it's a garbage sack, or even a paper bag."

"Did you know that lots of foster kids carry their stuff around in garbage bags?" Aubyn asked her mother. "I'd hate that! I'd feel like *I* was garbage."

Aubyn went to work. She wrote a flyer asking people to **donate** suitcases for foster kids. She called her project Suitcases for Kids. She printed 1,000 flyers and took them to churches, malls, grocery stores, and museums.

Donate means to give something to an organization.

Then Aubyn walked through the door to her front porch. She plopped down on the steps and waited for suitcases. She watched the crab apple trees drop their fruit, but no one brought a suitcase.

Tired of waiting, Aubyn asked her mom if she could use her savings of $50 to buy some suitcases. Her mom said yes. Aubyn's family donated some money, too.

Not long after that, suitcases started arriving at Aubyn's door. People dropped them off all day and into the evening. Aubyn piled the suitcases in the living room.

A friend pointed to the ceiling-high pile of suitcases. "You look like you *live* in a suitcase," she laughed.

Aubyn asked her brother Welland to be junior chairman of Suitcases for Kids. She asked some other friends to help, too. Aubyn and her friends borrowed their parents' cars (and their parents) and took 170 suitcases to the Catawba County Department of Social Services. There, officials agreed to give their support to Aubyn's project.

Still more suitcases poured in. Before she knew it, Aubyn was telling about her idea at the North Carolina Foster Care Directors meeting. She made a twelve-page starter kit to show other people how do a project like hers. She traveled to other states to teach people how to set up Suitcases for Kids.

Then Oprah Winfrey asked Aubyn to be on her show. After that, the idea of Suitcases for Kids spread like flower seeds in the wind. Soon Aubyn received many awards, and more people and businesses began to help pay for her program.

Aubyn also gave her Christmas and birthday money to foster kids. The money would help high-school kids buy yearbooks and class rings, rent tuxedos for proms, and pay graduation fees.

Before long, Aubyn had started branches of Suitcases for Kids in forty-nine states and Canada. "It makes me feel really good, because these kids truly need help," Aubyn told her sister.

A fourteen-year-old boy in Burke County, North Carolina, picked out a suitcase and told Aubyn, "That's the best gift I've ever gotten."

Aubyn looked at the sparkle in the boy's eyes. "Me, too," she grinned.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

If you'd like to start a Suitcases for Kids chapter in your area or donate used luggage, write to:

Suitcases for Kids
P.O. Box 669
Newton, NC 28658

Citizenship—What Does It Mean?

"The future depends entirely on what each of us does every day."

—Gloria Steinem

First through eighth graders at Trahagen School in Mount Vernon, New York, practice good citizenship by showing respect for other people and the earth. They work together to recycle, garden, plant trees, and write a newsletter.

Jason Dean Crowe of Newburgh, Indiana, writes and edits his own newspaper, *The Informer.* He publishes six issues a year. Jason is twelve years old and works for world peace. He donates money his paper earns to the American Cancer Society because his grandmother died of cancer. His paper goes to people in more than twenty-five states and twelve countries.

Both Jason and the kids at Trahagen School understand something important: Part of living in a **democracy** is to be a good **citizen.**

A democracy is a form of government. In a democracy, people choose their leaders by voting. The people and the leaders decide what laws everyone will follow. In a democracy, people have certain freedoms. They have the right to vote. They usually have the right to meet in groups and to choose their own religion. That *doesn't* mean people have the freedom to do anything they want. For example, one person doesn't have the right to harm or hurt someone else.

All countries have rules or laws that people must follow. Think about some of the laws in your own country. You know it's against the law to steal. You know you don't have the right to beat anybody up. But if you live in a democracy, you *do* have many freedoms. You're free to speak out about what you believe. Together with your family, you can choose where to live, what to read or watch on TV, and who to spend your time with. When you're older, you'll be free to choose what job you want. When you're an adult, you'll have the right to vote.

In the meantime, you can choose whether you want to eat chocolate or pistachio ice cream. You can decide if you want to read a book about angleworms or chimpanzees. And if you're a good citizen, you recycle your plastic ice-cream dish or put the empty wrapper in the trash can. You return the book to the library on or before the day it's due.

Following the rules and laws in your home or community is one way you show good **citizenship.** A citizen is a person who lives in a community. In a democracy, a citizen has both rights and responsibilities. As a good citizen, you do two important things:

- You use your freedom (rights) wisely.
- You do things to help at home and school and in your neighborhood and community (responsibilities).

If you're a good citizen, people will admire you. Parents, teachers, and other adults will trust you more and will more likely want you to be part of activities.

As a good citizen, you're a sort of "take charge of yourself" kid. You know the rules and you follow them. No one else has to tell you to do that. You look for ways to help your home and school be nice places for everyone. Other people will see this and look at you as a leader. When you grow up, you might be a leader in your town or even your country, because you will already have practiced being a good citizen.

How Can You Be a Good Citizen?

There are lots of ways to show that you're a good citizen. Three important ways are to show respect, be involved, and serve others.

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Show Respect

You're a good citizen when you care about the people, animals, places, and things around you. You show that you care by treating them all with respect. One way to show respect is by obeying all the rules and laws in your community, your home, and your school. That means you don't dig a hole in your school desk with your pencil or write **graffiti** (pictures, names, or words) on walls and doors. It means that you *do* water plants, feed the cat, and speak kindly to your parents, teachers, friends, sisters, and brothers.

In a democracy, being a good citizen can also mean that you're **patriotic**—that you love your country. You can show this when you salute the flag and treat it with respect. You can also show it when you sing patriotic songs such as "The Star-Spangled Banner" or "O Canada." As a patriotic citizen, you do what you can to learn about your nation's laws and customs.

Be Involved

There are lots of ways to be involved. One way is to work with your classmates and teachers to make rules about how people at school can get along together. Another way is to encourage your dad and mom and other adults to vote. Offer to go with them to the polling (voting) place.

And you don't have to be old enough to vote before you can have a say in your government. With your family, class, or group, you can visit a town or county council meeting to see how laws are made and changed. You might even sign up to talk to the council about something important that needs fixing. Maybe you know a street that needs a stop sign or a playground where the steps on the slide are broken.

If you care about a law, you can **lobby** for or against it. That means you can go to your city council, state house, or state capitol and tell the lawmakers how you want them to vote. Or you can write letters to your lawmakers. Maybe you want a law that lowers the speed limit in neighborhoods where kids play. Maybe you want your government to spend money on a new library or sports stadium. Maybe you want it *not* to spend money on those things. You can think of something on your own. Get a trusted adult to help you with this.

If you're a good citizen, you watch out for other people, animals, trees, and **property** (things that belong to people). When you see something happen that's unfair or unsafe, say something! Speaking up is an important way to be involved. Tell your mom, dad, teacher, club leader, coach, or another adult you trust.

Serve

Serve in your community, your school, and your home. What can you do? Fix things up. Plant bushes. Rake leaves. Recycle batteries. Remember to walk—not run—in the halls at school. Take a few minutes to clean out the dust bunnies from under your bed. These are simple ways, but they all show that you can be a good citizen.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here's a book that has lots of ideas for taking action to be a good citizen:

The Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose—and Turn Creative Thinking into Positive Action (Revised, Expanded, Updated Edition) **by Barbara A. Lewis (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1998). Step-by-step instructions show how to write letters, do interviews, make speeches, raise money, and more. Ages 10 and up.**

7 WAYS TO BE A GOOD CITIZEN

Care about your community, state or province, and country. Obey the laws and rules.

Improve something in your home or neighborhood.

Take the time to learn about how your government works.

Involve yourself by becoming a leader at school or at your place of worship.

Zero in on something that needs fixing and work with others to do the job.

Encourage your parents and other adults you know to vote.

Never forget to show respect for people, animals, plants, and property.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. Your best friend has a dog named Bailey. You really love Bailey. You know that your friend is in charge of feeding him and giving him fresh water. But you also see that your friend doesn't always take good care of Bailey. Sometimes the food in the dog dish is crusty. Sometimes the water dish is empty. If you're a good citizen, do you have a responsibility to do anything? If so, what? If not, why?

2. There's a girl in your class who told you secretly that her father hits her and hurts her. She showed you bruises on her back, but asked you never to tell anyone. If you're a good citizen, should you keep your friend's secret? If so, why? If not, what should you do about it?

IMPORTANT!

If you are being hurt by someone, you can get help. Talk to an adult you trust. That might be your dad or mom. Or it might be a teacher, an aunt or uncle, a counselor at school, or someone at your place of worship.

3. Your mom isn't home. While the sitter's busy putting your two-year-old brother to bed, you start playing hockey in the kitchen with the new hockey stick you got for your birthday. You know the rule: You're never supposed to use the hockey stick indoors. But it's raining outside. While you play, you accidentally hit the cupboard with the stick. It dents the door and scrapes off some paint. Now you don't know what to do. You could tell your mom, but if you do she'll probably take away your hockey stick. You could say nothing and hope she doesn't notice. And there's a little voice inside you that says you could blame it on your younger brother. No matter what, you've decided that you *won't* break the rule again. But should you tell the truth about what happened? As a good citizen, what should you do? What do you think will happen as a result?

4. You and your family just learned that the after-school program you go to may soon close. The director sent a letter that says there's not enough money to keep it going. You know that you're not the only kid whose parents aren't home when school gets out. You and your classmates need a safe place to play and learn after school. As good citizens, what can you and your family do?

More Ways to Be a Good Citizen

Here are some activities you can do to get in the habit of good citizenship.

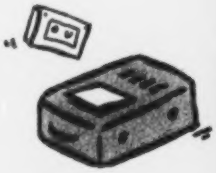
Learn About Good Citizens

Ask a librarian or bookstore clerk to help you find a book or video about an important citizen in history or today. There are lots of people you could read about. Here are just a few ideas: Abigail Adams, Marie Curie, Frederick Douglass, Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Indira Gandhi, Thomas Jefferson, Chief Joseph, Martin Luther King Jr., Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Rosa Parks, Oscar Arias Sánchez, Mother Teresa, Harriet Tubman, and Elie Wiesel. Learn what you can about why the person you choose was or is a good citizen. Did the person do something to help a community, a country, or the world?

Have Family Meetings

Family meetings are a great way to make plans and solve problems together. You can think about them as democracy at home. If you have a family meeting each week, everyone will know they'll have a chance to talk over important things. To get your family started, decide together when and where to meet. For example, you might meet every Thursday night right after supper. Or you might meet first thing every Saturday morning.

Run your meetings like a democracy. Take turns being **chairperson** (the person in charge of the meeting) and **recorder** (the person who writes down important things you talk about). If you have a problem to talk about, let each person explain his or her feelings and ideas about it. Listen respectfully. Vote on a way to try to solve the problem. If you want to plan something fun like a cookout or a trip to the zoo, have everyone offer suggestions. Talk about the ideas and choose the one most people agree to.

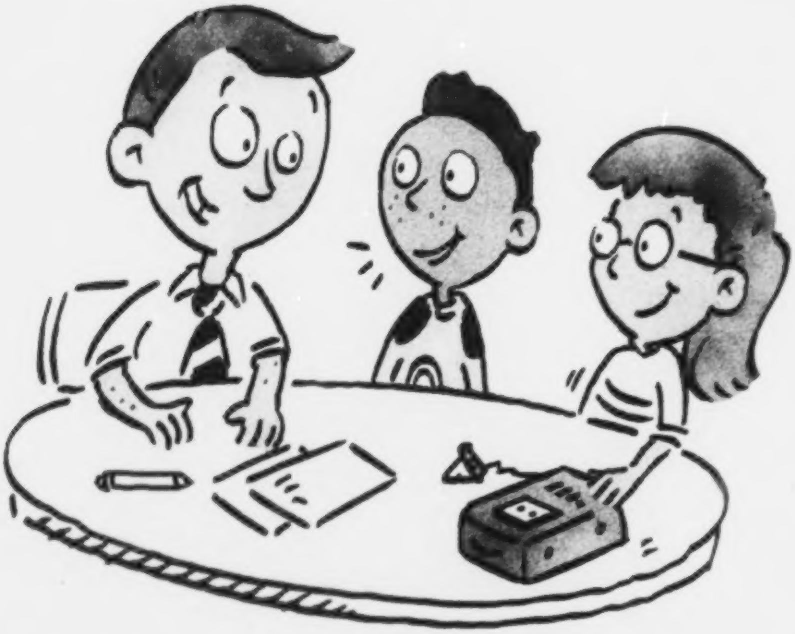


The family meeting will let everyone practice working together as a democracy. You'll share ideas, show respect, and make decisions by voting. Of course, your parents or guardians are still in charge of the family. They'll probably have some rules that they won't put up for a vote. But you'll find there are lots of decisions you and your family will be able to make together.

A FAMILY MEETING PLAN

Here's one plan you could follow at each family meeting:

1. Read the notes the recorder took at the last meeting.
2. Talk about old business (problems or plans you discussed at the last meeting).
3. Talk about new business (new things you want to plan or talk about).
4. Finish the meeting with a fun activity like a story or game.



> **"To define democracy in one word, we must use the word 'cooperation.'"**
>
> ***—Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th U.S. president***

Go with Your Parents to Vote

The next time there's an election, go with your dad or mom to vote. Encourage your neighbors, teachers, and other adults to vote, too. To find out what you need to know about the election, call or have an adult call the voter registration office or the League of Women Voters. (You can find local phone numbers in your telephone book.) Have these questions ready:

- When will the election be?
- Where will it be held?
- How do people register (sign up) to vote?
- Where can I learn about the people and subjects to vote about?

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here's a chance for *you* to vote. This organization makes it possible for young people to visit polling (voting) places on election days. Kids get to vote on the same issues and candidates that adults are voting for. Write to the organization, or ask your dad or mom if you may call. If there's a computer you can use, visit the Web site.

Kids Voting USA
398 South Mill Avenue, Suite 304
Tempe, AZ 85281
Phone number: (602) 921-3727
Web site: *www.kidsvotingusa.org*

Read Stories About Citizenship

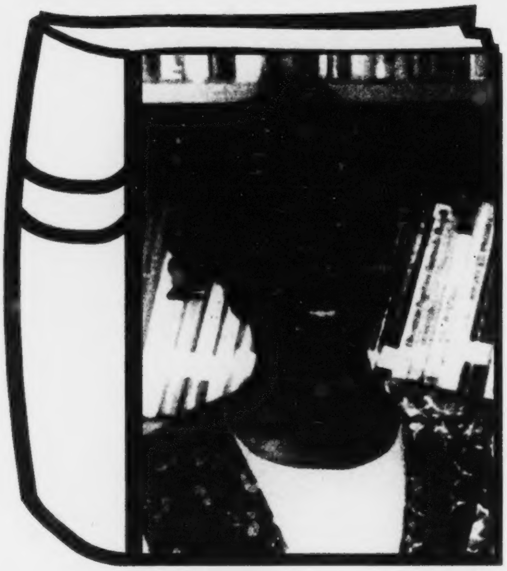
Brother Eagle, Sister Sky: A Message from Chief Seattle by Susan Jeffers (New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1991). A story based on a speech made by Chief Seattle 150 years ago about protecting the environment. Ages 4–8.

I, Juan De Pareja by Elizabeth Borton De Trevino (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995). Based on the true story of a slave who was given to the great Spanish painter Velazquez. The relationship between the two men became one of friendship and equality. Ages 4–8.

Molly's Pilgrim by Barbara Cohen (New York: Yearling Books, 1990). Molly's family has moved to America from Russia. Her classmates make fun of her accent, her clothes, and her doll, which her mother has dressed in Russian clothes. The teacher helps them see that Molly's mother is a modern Pilgrim who came to America for religious freedom. Ages 6–9.

The Streets Are Free by Kurusa (Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 1995). A group of children lose their play area that had trees and streams. They begin to play in the streets. The neighborhood works together to make a playground for the children. Ages 8–10.

Thunder Cave by Roland Smith (New York: Hyperion, 1997). Young Jacob Lansa travels to Kenya in search of his father. In Kenya, Jacob faces many life-threatening challenges as he tries to save a herd of elephants from dry weather and hunters. Ages 8–11.



Kanesha Sonee Johnson

Someone Who Cooperates

Kanesha Sonee Johnson Brings Classmates Together
Hawthorne, California

Kanesha Sonee Johnson started fifth grade at Williams Elementary School in Hawthorne, California. She was placed in a **bilingual** class. Kanesha saw that the Vietnamese and African-American kids kept to themselves. They didn't work together in the classroom unless the teacher told them to. At recess, when kids played four-square or volleyball, Vietnamese kids chose other Vietnamese kids to be on their teams. African-American kids chose other African-Americans.

Bilingual means using two different languages, like English and Vietnamese. A bilingual class is one where some of the kids speak English and some speak a different language.

Although Kanesha was African-American, she wanted to make friends with the Vietnamese kids. She thought about it and came up with an idea. She was a very good student who always got A's in language and reading, so she offered to teach English to Thein, Van, and Thonh. The three children agreed. Kanesha gave them homework sentences to write in English. She told them to learn how to pronounce all the words. Before class in the mornings, the three kids handed their homework to Kanesha. She corrected their papers and helped them with mistakes. Thein, Van, and Thonh began to learn English faster.

But Kanesha's African-American friends started to call her names. They teased her because she was smart and because she was trying to help kids learn English.

"They don't understand," Kanesha thought. She told the friends who teased her, "If we all play together and cooperate, we'll have more fun."

After school one day, Kanesha told her troubles to her mother. "They make fun of me," Kanesha said. "Now the only kids I can play with are Thein, Van, and Thonh. Even my old friends are saying 'You think you're so smart!' And they talk about me behind my back."

Kanesha's mother smiled and cupped her daughter's chin in her hand. "Honey," she said, "just ignore it. When they're talking about you, that means you're on their minds." Kanesha knew what her mother meant. If she was on the kids' minds, they must be thinking about what she said about cooperating.

So Kanesha kept helping Thein, Van, and Thonh learn English. And she continued telling her other friends that they should play with the Vietnamese kids, too. Soon some of Kanesha's friends invited her and her three Vietnamese classmates to play volleyball with them. Before you could count backward from ten in Vietnamese, the two groups were playing together in mixed teams. The name-calling stopped.

When Thonh learned he had to move away, he told the fifth-grade teacher, Mr. Tran, "I'm going to miss Kanesha's homework. It was helping me a lot. I have more friends now, too." That was the first time Mr. Tran learned that Kanesha had been teaching the kids English. He smiled at her and thanked her for the help.

"It's okay," Kanesha grinned. "If we all learn to cooperate, then our lives will be smoother and more peaceful. There's a lot we can learn from each other."

Cooperation— What Does It Mean?

"Working together is like making a word. If one of the letters is missing, the word just won't make sense."

—Hien Le, 11

Did you ever think about how all the parts of your body work together to help you to live? If your brain, nerves, and muscles didn't work together, you wouldn't be able to skip, lick an ice-cream cone, or even sleep.

People need to work together, too. If musicians in a band didn't do that, how would their music sound? If ball players didn't work with their coach and each other, how could they play the game as a team? People need to **cooperate** in order to get along and get things done.

WHERE DID THE REST OF THE BAND GO?
HONK!

Cooperation means working or playing together peacefully. When you cooperate with other people, you all make an effort to do something together. Cooperating lets you accomplish things that you can't do alone. It also lets you get along better with your parents, friends, brothers, and sisters. "No way!" you might say. "I can't cooperate with my sister. We always fight because she teases me." It's true that you can't *make* your sister, or anybody else, do what you want her to do. But you can choose how *you'll* act and what *you'll* do.

People get angry. They don't always agree with each other. It's normal and natural for human beings to have disagreements. Disagreeing isn't the problem. The problem is in *how* you work out the disagreement. Will you be angry and hit someone? Or will you talk about your problem with your sister or friend and then choose something to do that both of you can agree on?

"Why should I do that?" you might wonder. Because if you learn to cooperate better, you'll feel better about yourself. You'll probably have more friends and fight and argue with them less often. Your parents and teachers will probably respect you more, too. Learning to cooperate can help you get along with people and be a happier person.

How Can You Cooperate?

Working together to reach a goal is one way that people cooperate. Another way is by making an effort to solve problems peacefully—without yelling, hitting, or saying mean things. These things might not be easy to do at first. But lots of things don't start out easy.

Think about learning to ride a bike. That takes time and practice. You might wobble and fall off the bike many times before you learn how to make smooth turns and "pop wheelies." The same is true for learning to cooperate with people. It takes practice, too.

When people disagree and start to fight about a problem, they have a **conflict.** There are two words that can help you remember ways to cooperate and solve conflicts peacefully: TALKS and CALM.

> **"I always tumble into trouble when I lose my temper."**
>
> ***—Jane Louise Curry***

Use TALKS to Solve a Problem

When you want to work out a problem with someone, it helps to have a plan. Here's a cooperation plan with words to help you remember the steps to follow. It's called TALKS, which stands for the first word of each step: Talk, Act, Listen, Keep, and Share.

TALKS—5 STEPS FOR TALKING ABOUT A PROBLEM

Talk about what happened. Be honest. Explain why each of you did what you did. Were you tired? Angry? Grumpy?

Act and talk politely. Talk about the *problem,* not the *person.* Don't say something like "I hate you for taking my pencil." Instead, say, "I don't like it when someone takes my pencil." Or, "I don't like it when my toys are missing."

Listen to the other person's side of the story. Think about how he or she might feel. Ask questions so you understand. Learning to listen takes lots of practice. Don't give up!

Keep trying to cooperate. Have an open mind. If one idea doesn't work, try another.

Share in finding a solution. Find an answer to your problem that both of you can agree on.

IMPORTANT!

If someone won't stop teasing or fighting, it's time to ask a grown-up for help. Ask your teacher, dad, mom, or another adult to help the two of you talk together and solve the problem.

Here's an example of two kids using TALKS to solve a problem. See if you can tell how they followed each step:

T **Anika:** "My pencil's gone. Do you know where it is? You have one just like it. Is that my pencil you have?"

Jamal: "No, this is mine. I didn't take yours."

A **Anika:** "I'm *so* mad I lost that pencil. It was my favorite one!"

L **Jamal:** "But I didn't take it. *I* feel bad if you think I did."

K **Anika:** "It's gone, so somebody must have taken it. Your pencil's just like mine—how do you know that one's yours?"

Jamal: "I promise I didn't take it. Don't you believe me?"

Anika: "I guess I do."

S **Jamal:** "Let's look together. Maybe it rolled under the cupboard. I'll check there."

Anika: "And I'll look through my desk again."

Jamal: "And we can ask if anybody else has seen it. If we don't find it, we can take turns using mine. I've got other pencils I can use."

Anika: "Thanks."

Here's something to think about: It's easier to pull weeds from a garden when they're tiny. The same is true about problems with other people. It's easier to avoid fighting by talking things over before they get worse.

When You're Angry, Work to Be CALM

Do you get into lots of fights? Do other kids pick fights with you? Are you often mad at someone? Do some kids act like they're afraid of you? If you said yes to any of these questions, you might need to learn how to handle your anger.

We all get angry sometimes. That's okay. But it's not okay to hit, yell, fight, or name-call when we're mad about something. There are lots of ways to let angry feelings out and to deal with problems that upset you. To do this, you can learn steps for being CALM. CALM stands for the first word of each step: Calm, Admit, Learn, and Make.

CALM DOWN— 4 STEPS TO EASING ANGRY FEELINGS

Calm yourself down. There are lots of ways to do this. You might take a deep breath, speak slowly, or soften your voice. Or you might take time out to do something else; rest, read, or jump up and down until you're tired. Try different things to see what works for you.

Admit that you have a problem. Look at what happened and what you said or did. "I yelled." "I said something mean." "I broke the light." Don't run away or ignore it. It's okay to make mistakes if you learn from them.

Learn to share your feelings with someone. Talk about angry or upset feelings with an adult you trust. You might talk to your mom or dad, your teacher, your club leader, or someone at your place of worship. Keep looking until you find someone who will listen and talk to you about how you feel. Have the person help you find ways to deal with angry feelings.

Make a change in how you deal with anger. Decide on something safe and healthy to do when you feel angry. It's not safe or healthy to throw things, holler at people, or hit or kick someone. What can you do instead? You could try jumping jacks. You could make funny faces at yourself in the mirror. You might want to write in a journal. Decide that next time you're angry and having a conflict, you'll count to ten backwards before you speak, think of something nice to say, or walk away until you feel better.

Practice ways to handle anger. Keep practicing. Make a list of all the times you changed your angry feelings or got rid of them in a safe and peaceful way. The list will help you see how you're improving. Are you starting to get mad less often? If so, pat yourself on the back (if you can reach it).

FIND OUT MORE . . .

KidsHealth.org for Kids is a Web site you can visit to learn lots about being healthy, including ways to deal with anger. To check out these tips, go to *www.kidshealth.org/kid/* and click on "Dealing With Feelings." (You'll find other good information about health and safety at this Web site, too. Ask your mom or dad to visit the site with you.)

Another way to make a change is to talk about the conflict. When you do, show respect for the other person. If your friend teases you and you don't like it, tell the friend how you feel. Don't yell, "You make me so mad when you tease me!" Instead, use a calm voice and say, "I don't like to be teased. I wish you'd stop." Maybe you and your brother each want to play a different game. You might say to him, "How about if we play one game of each?" Or, "Why don't we draw straws?" Or, "Let's play the game you like this time, and the one I like next time."

> **"Peace can be made in the neighborhoods, the living rooms, the playing fields, and the classrooms of our country."**
>
> ***—Jimmy Carter, 39th U.S. president***

Conflicts aren't good or bad—they just *are*. You can't avoid some conflicts. What's important is how you handle conflicts that occur. TALKS and CALM are two tools you can use to help you solve conflicts when they happen.

What If?

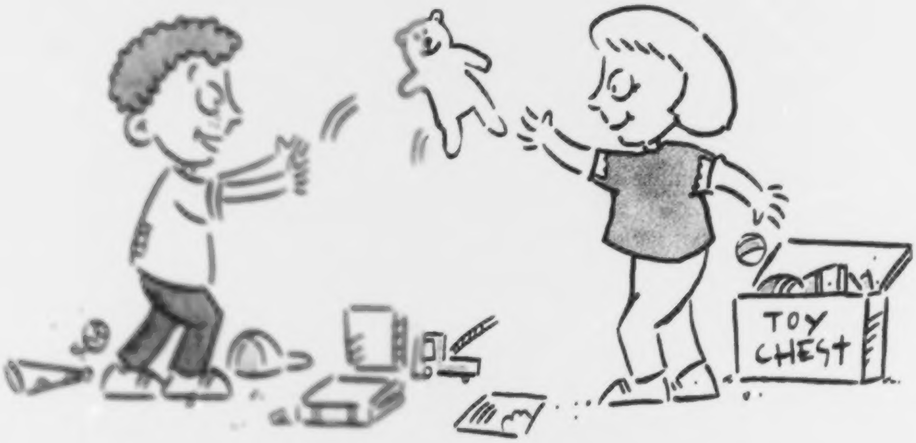
Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. Your teacher has just divided your class into groups and told you that each group will be doing a service project. You're supposed to work with the other people in your group to make a plan. How will you come up with a good idea? How will you plan your project? What will you do first? Second? Third? What will you do if people disagree?

2. The kid who lives next door picks on you all the time. He calls you names and takes your toys. How might you stand up for yourself and still show respect (be nice)? What can you do to help your neighbor understand how you feel? What could you do to help both of you cooperate better?

3. You like to tell other people when they're doing something wrong. But your friends don't like it when you correct them. They think you're being bossy. How can you encourage friends to do what's right without being bossy?

4. You and your sister want to go to the park to play. Your grandma has told you both to clean your room before you go. How can you cooperate and finish quickly so you can get to the park?



More Ways to Cooperate

Here are some activities that will help you cooperate.

Make a Cooperation Collage

Here's what you'll need:

- Paper or posterboard
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Magazines for cutting out pictures (ask permission before you cut!)
- Colored pencils or markers

A **collage** is a poster with lots of different pictures on it. There are many ways you could make a collage about cooperation. You could show pictures of people sharing, taking turns, working together, and treating each other with respect. Or you could show pictures of people *not* cooperating and write a sentence under each saying what the people can do to get along better. You could cut out words instead of pictures, choosing words about cooperation ("Share," "Take turns," "Talk it over," "Work together," "Stay calm"). You can think of other ideas.

Show your collage to your family and friends. Talk with them about cooperation and what it means. Tape your picture on the refrigerator or pin it on a bulletin board in your room. Keep it there as a reminder to find positive ways to work with other people and peaceful ways to solve problems.

Teach Your Family About TALKS

Here's what you'll need:

- Posterboard
- Marker

Show other people in your family "TALKS—5 Steps for Talking About a Problem" (page 45). Suggest that people in your family use the steps when there's a problem or conflict. (This would be a good thing to talk about in a family meeting. See "Have Family Meetings," pages 37–38.) Make a large TALKS poster to display somewhere in your home. That way, people will be able to see it when they need to solve a problem peacefully.

Make a Cooperative Chores Chart

RECYCLE BOX

Here's what you'll need:

- Chart paper (such as newsprint)
- Marker or pen

Chores at home often go better when people cooperate to get them done. Talk about chores that two or more people could do together. Make a "Cooperative Chores Chart" and have people sign up to do chores together. (This is another good activity for a family meeting.) Here are some jobs that might be on your chart:

Chore	Who will do it together?
Wash and dry the dishes.	Monday, Wednesday, Friday—Grandpa and Emilio
	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday—Marta and Gina
	Sunday—Mom and Grandpa
Dust and vacuum.	Ray and Marta
Rake and bag leaves this weekend.	Everybody!
Fold and put away laundry.	Emilio and Dad
Shop for groceries this weekend.	Dad, Mom, and Ray
Take out recycling.	Gina and Grandpa

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Make a Cooperation Log

Here's what you'll need:

- Notebook and pen or pencil
- *If you wish:* Materials for decorating your notebook (such as paints, markers, colored pencils, pictures cut from magazines, glue stick, ribbon, and stickers)

A **log** is a kind of list, diary, or journal. When you write in it, you tell the date and describe something that happened. (*Example:* Oct. 10—I didn't slam my door when the baby cried. Good for me! And I helped Dad set the table without being asked.) Make a "Cooperation Log" to keep track of times when you work well with others, solve problems peacefully, and handle anger in a safe, healthy way. You could use a special notebook for this. If you like, decorate your notebook.

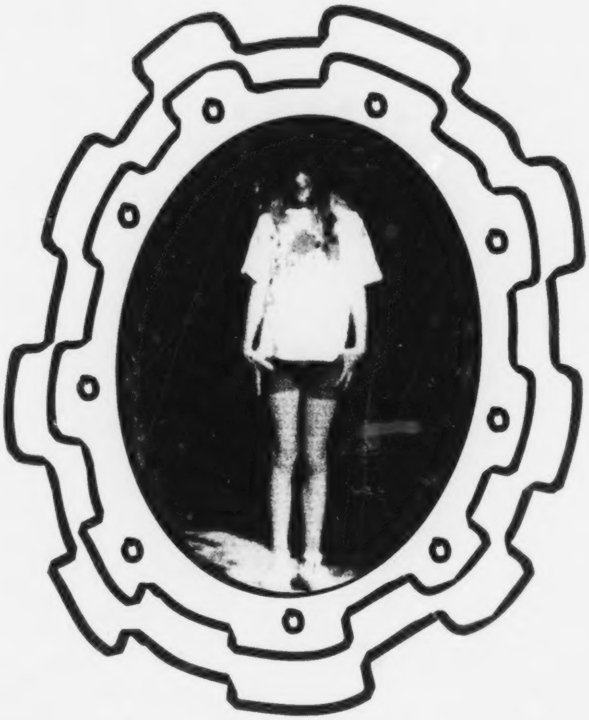
Read Stories About Cooperation

Carrots and Miggle by Ardath Mayhar (New York: Atheneum, 1986). Carrots, a young Texas farm girl, is happy until a cousin from London comes to live in her home. Cousin Emiglia (Miggle) didn't know people could work so hard or get so dirty. It takes time for Carrots and Miggle to learn to cooperate. Ages 10–12.

Crash by Jerry Spinelli (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). When John "Crash" Coogan carries a prank too far, he learns a lesson about cooperation and caring. Ages 9–12.

Patchwork Quilt by Valerie Flournoy (New York: Dial Press, 1985). A girl helps her grandmother make a quilt that tells the story of her family and how they cooperate. Ages 5–8.

Peace Begins with You by Katherine Scholes (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books/Little, Brown & Co., 1989). Shows ways to resolve conflicts at home and around the globe. Ages 6–10.



Sonja Balic outside her home in Banja Luka

Someone Who's Fair

Sonja Balic Leaves Her Bosnian Home

Banja Luka, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Sonja Balic was six years old when war began in Bosnia. She heard of children whose parents were taken away. She heard of shootings and bombings. Still, the war seemed far away from her family and home in Banja Luka, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But not for long. The war was being fought among Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. Sonja's mother was Serbian and her dad was Muslim. Just after the war began, all the Muslims were fired from their jobs. Sonja's dad lost his job at a newspaper. After that, no one would hire him. He had to do construction work without any pay. Sonja told her father, "It isn't fair." He only nodded and hugged her close to him.

Sonja's mom, a dental assistant, wasn't fired. But Sonja's parents were still worried. She heard them talking in low voices. Her father said, "There isn't much money. No gas. Good food is getting harder to find. It gets worse every day."

Sonja didn't think food was hard to find. She knew her grandparents would share their tomatoes and cabbages. And Sonja's family grew their own carrots and potatoes.

The war still seemed far away to Sonja as she rolled on her in-line skates with her best friend, Ivana. Sometimes Sonja and Ivana hung out in the park nearby with other friends. They swung on the swings or played on the climbing bars. Sonja could fling herself all the way around on the bars. She loved skipping past the town's beautiful old castle and the Vrbas River that flowed beside it.

But when Sonja asked for a dollhouse for her eighth birthday, her mother said, "Some other time, Sonja. There isn't enough money now. It's the war."

Sonja only nodded her head. But she thought to herself, "It still isn't fair."

Sonja began to hear more bad stories about the war. There was a boy who saw his parents shot. Another boy shot his own arm off while playing with his dad's army gun. Sonja's cousins in Sarajevo had to live in their basements because their homes were bombed out.

A **mosque** is a Muslim place of worship.

One by one, all the **mosques** were being bombed and destroyed. Two blocks away from Sonja's home there was a beautiful mosque. One night, the mosque was bombed. The bomb also shattered the windows in Sonja's house.

Sonja asked her mother, "Why do people have to fight? I think it's stupid. We used to all be friends."

"This is true," her mother answered. "A few people decide to fight, but then the rest of us suffer, too."

Her father shook his head.

It was growing too dangerous for Muslims in Bosnia. Just before Sonja's tenth birthday, her father flew to the United States to start a new life for his family. The war no longer seemed far away. It was knocking at her door.

When their dad left, Sonja's little brother cried and wailed, "It's not fair!"

Sonja wrapped her arms around him. "Things are *not* always fair," she said. "You have to get through tough times and just keep going." He wiped his eyes and smiled up at her. But later that night, when Sonja was alone, she cried into her pillow.

The family waited for another year and a half before Sonja, her brother, and her mom were able to leave Bosnia for the United States.

Before she left, the kids at Sonja's school threw a party for her. They gave her a necklace, a locket, pictures, and phone numbers. "Come back soon," they said. Sonja swallowed hard, because she knew she might not be back for a long time.

Sonja had to leave her friends, her grandparents and other relatives, her beautiful home, and the castle by the river. It was the hardest thing she had ever done. It didn't seem fair to her that guns and armies should tear up people's lives. So Sonja decided that no matter how unfair things were around her, she would *always* treat other people fairly. That was the best way she knew to try to make the world a better place.

Fairness—What Does It Mean?

> **"I know, up on top you are seeing great sights,**
> **But down at the bottom we, too, should have some rights."**
>
> ***—Dr. Seuss***

Have you ever felt something wasn't **fair**? Maybe someone pushed ahead of you in line at the movies. Maybe your friend got a brand-new bike when you didn't have a bike at all. Maybe your brother can stay up later than you. Maybe the whole class had to miss recess even though only a few kids were misbehaving. Maybe you wish you had a dad who coached soccer, like your neighbor's stepdad does. Maybe someone you love got sick or hurt.

And maybe your dad, mom, or teacher has told you, "That's just the way life is. Life isn't always fair." You may wonder, "Why not?" Or, you might think, "If that's how life is, why should *I* try to be fair?"

When you're fair, other people like, trust, and respect you more. They see you as a person who's honest and who cares about others. They can look to you to be a leader and to learn from your example. When you treat them fairly, they're more likely to start acting the same way.

Fairness means treating other people the way *you* want to be treated. It means trying to give everyone rights and chances like those you have. When you're fair, you do your best to share, take turns, and treat each person with respect. You try to make things "fair and square."

Fairness *doesn't* mean that everything is equal or the same. For example, you may wish you had a dog, like your friend does. But your friend lives in a house, and you live in an apartment, where dogs aren't allowed. You can still treat your friend fairly—and play with her dog when you visit.

Lots of things in the world aren't fair. It's not fair that people are hungry or homeless. It's not fair that people suffer in wars. It's not fair that in some parts of the world, children have to work instead of going to school. Many people are aware of these problems and are trying to change things for the better. It takes time and effort to work for fairness.

Imagine a world where no one was ever fair. What would it be like? Everyone would be selfish. No one would care about anyone else. Would you want to live in that kind of world? We all need to do our best to be fair. Every act of fairness makes the world a better place.

How Can You Be Fair?

There are many ways you can work to be fair. You can share and take turns. You can decide not to be jealous of somebody else. You can show respect for people even if they're different from you. You can find a good way to act when someone isn't fair to you.

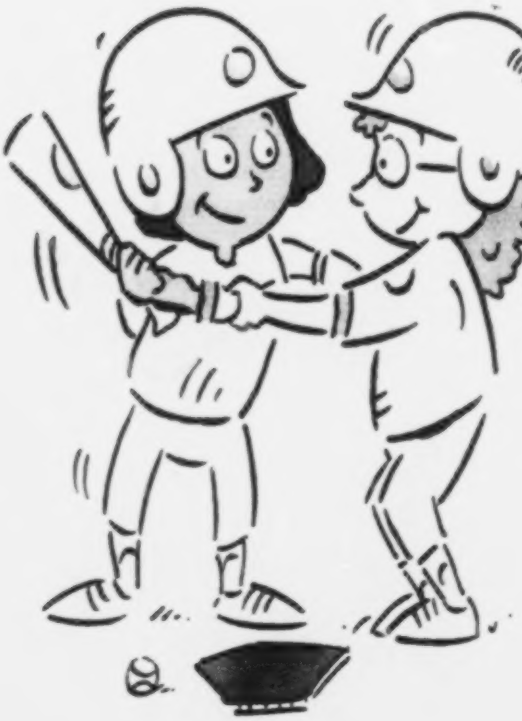
Share and Take Turns

You can take turns at recess with the swings, the slide, or with sports equipment. You can take turns playing a computer game. You can share a bag of chips or a box of markers. You can wait in line to get on the bus or use the bathroom. Other people are waiting, too, and some of them were there before you. It's fair to let them go first.

Decide Not to Be Jealous

Sometimes other people have things you don't. You might feel **jealous** and wish you could have what they have or be like them. It can be hard not to feel jealous. But being jealous just makes you unhappy. And it can make other people feel bad, too.

At softball, maybe your friend hits the ball more often than you do. What if you said to her, "It's not fair you're so good at batting!" Your friend might feel bad about her special skill. Instead, you could say, "You sure can hit that ball! How do you do it?" Then your friend will feel good, and you'll feel better, too. She might even offer to help you practice your swing.



Remember, someone else's talent might be different from yours, but you have talents and skills, too. Part of your job is to find your own special abilities and interests and then work to develop them. If you do your best not to be jealous, you might notice someone who can help you "grow" your talent. You might also find that you can help other people do the same.

"America is . . . like a quilt . . . many pieces, many colors, many sizes, all woven and held together by a common thread."

—Jesse Jackson

Respect All People

People are different from each other in lots of ways. Some people have dark skin, some have light. Some people speak English, some speak Spanish, some Vietnamese, and some

Swahili. Some people are Christian, or Jewish, or Muslim, or Buddhist. Some people are good at reading or math. Other people aren't. Some people can jump and run with ease. Other people can't.

It's not fair to ignore or be mean to someone who's different from you. Why not be friendly to people who aren't the same as you? Then you can look for ways to learn about and enjoy each other.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Save the Children works for children's rights around the world. The organization was started by a boy who didn't think it was fair for some kids to have to work in factories. Write, call (be sure to ask permission first), or visit the Web site to get some ideas on how you can help make the world more fair for all kids.

Save the Children
1620 I Street NW #202
Washington, DC 20006
Phone number: (202) 293-4170
Web site: *www.savethechildren.org/*

When Someone Else Isn't Fair

When someone isn't fair to you, you might feel like crying, getting mad, yelling, or doing something mean back. None of these things will help you or the other person learn to be fair to each other. Here are some ideas to try when someone's not fair to you:

- Talk about the problem with the person. You might say, "I think everyone should have a turn. Don't you?" Or, "I think each of us should have the same number of pieces."
- Ask an adult, like your teacher or parent, for help.
- Ignore what's happened. If it doesn't bother you a lot, let it go.

HOW ABOUT PLAYING CARDS INSTEAD?

- Laugh it off. This can surprise people and help them get out of a mean mood.
- Change the activity. Find something else to do together.
- Leave and go somewhere else to work or play.

4 WAYS TO TREAT PEOPLE FAIRLY

Find ways to share, take turns, and feel less jealous.

Ask people what you can do to help make things more fair.

Include others in games and activities. Don't leave people out.

Respect people who are different from you.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. Your brother Alex wants to take ballet lessons. Your other brother and a friend tell Alex that dancing is "sissy stuff." Is that fair? Why or why not? What might happen to Alex if he takes ballet lessons anyway? What might happen if he doesn't? What would you do or say in this situation?

2. Your mom promises to take you and your friend to an amusement park for your birthday. You can't wait to go on the roller coaster and all kinds of other fun rides. But on your birthday, you wake up and see dark clouds in the sky. It looks like it's going to be a rainy day. Your mom says, "I think we should save the amusement park for another day. It won't be fun if it rains." You cry, "That's not faaaaiiir! You promised!" Is your mom being unfair? Why or why not? Is there something you and your mom could do to help make things fair for everybody? What?

3. Your neighborhood has mostly black people and white people, and you get along fine. A new kid named Kuri moves in. Kuri's Japanese. You notice that some of your friends ignore Kuri or make fun of her. You want to help, but you're afraid they may make fun of you, too. How might you help make things more fair for Kuri *and* your friends? What might happen if you do that?

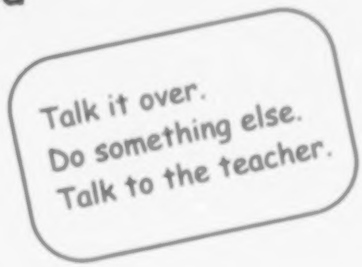
More Ways to Be Fair

Here are some activities you can do to find more ways to be fair.

Make a Fairness Pocket Card

Here's what you'll need:

- File card
- Fine-line marker (or markers in a variety of colors, if you wish)


Talk it over.
Do something else.
Talk to the teacher.

On the file card, write a list of things you can do when someone isn't fair. You might use the ideas on pages 59–60 or write other ideas in your own words. Make the card colorful if you want.

Keep your card in your pocket, backpack, or desk. When someone's not being fair with you, take a "time out" for yourself and look at your "Fairness Pocket Card." Find an idea that might help.

Make Family Chores Fair

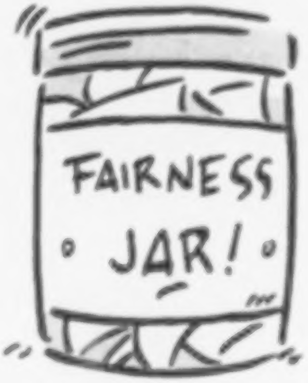
Talk with your family about the different chores that need to be done at home. Discuss how to make chores fair for everyone. For example, is it easier to collect trash and recycle than to vacuum and dust? Or maybe one night a person has to do piles of dishes after a big meal. The next night, somebody else has to clean up after a meal of take-out pizza. Is that fair? How could you make it fair? Listen to everyone's ideas on how to make the chores fair. Try to plan a week's worth of chores in a way that feels fair to everybody. Was it hard or easy to do this? Why?

This is a good thing to do at a family meeting. See "Have Family Meetings," pages 37–38, to learn about family meetings. You might also do the same kind of activity at school to make classroom chores fair.

Start a Fairness Jar

Here's what you'll need:

- Large, clean jar, coffee can, or box with lid
- Label
- Marker
- Paper
- Scissors


FAIRNESS JAR!

Label your container, and place it where everyone in the family or class can reach it. Cut paper into slips and place the slips beside the jar. When something unfair happens to somebody, the person can write a note about what happened and place it in the jar. Once a week, meet together and talk about ways to make things more fair. (At home, this is a good thing to do at a family meeting, too.)

Make Games More Fair

Think of games you like to play with your friends—people whose skills and abilities are about the same as yours. What if you want to play the same games with younger kids, or kids with disabilities, or elderly people? How might you change the games to make them more fair for people of *un*equal ability?

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Here are a few ideas for making games more fair. You can think of others:

- **Checkers or chess.** Instead of trying to beat each other, cooperate to make the best moves for the best overall game. For every move, talk over different ways it could be played. Agree on the best one.
- **Sorry!** Send the weaker player's piece back ten spaces instead of all the way home. Or switch sides halfway through.
- **Solitaire.** Play with two people and switch turns playing the cards. If the game "comes out," you both win.

Read Stories About Fairness

Hello, My Name Is Scrambled Eggs by Jamie Gilson (New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1985). Harvey tries to make his new Vietnamese friend into an American-style person. But Tuan has his own ideas. Ages 9–12.

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli (New York: HarperCollins, 1992). A mysterious hero brings black and white citizens of the town together. Ages 7–12.

Stay Away from Simon! by Carol Carrick (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991). After a mentally handicapped boy follows Lucy and her brother home one day, the children need to examine their fears and feelings. Ages 9–11.

The War With Grandpa by Robert Kimmel Smith (New York: Delacorte, 1984). Peter doesn't think it's fair that he has to give his bedroom to Grandpa, who comes to live with the family. Ages 9–11.

FORGIVENESS

Ché Butler-Whitebear

Someone Who's Forgiving

Ché Butler-Whitebear Learns from His Ancestors
Otis, Oregon

"You look like a girl!" a tall boy said, pulling on Ché's long black hair. Eight-year-old Ché Butler-Whitebear knew he was a boy—a brave and strong one. He wanted to wear his hair long in the Native American way. Tempted to punch the tall boy's nose, Ché closed his fist. But he stopped himself. It wouldn't help.

A girl with a long red ponytail skipped up to Ché and said, "Indians were gone with the dinosaurs." She giggled.

Ché's cheeks felt hot as coals, but he thought of the peaceful teachings of his family and his grandfather, and didn't say anything. He just walked away.

Then his teacher said that the buffalo had died out because the Indians killed them all. When Ché heard this, he got mad. It wasn't true. He ran home and told his mother he didn't want to go back to the school.

Ché's mother understood. "Ché-Man," she said, "I will enroll you in a better school." Soon Ché was attending Neskowin Valley School. He loved this new school, where he studied and learned a great deal.

Ché loved his family even more than his new school—especially his younger brother, Budhah-Boy. Budhah-Boy was four and a half. Ché helped his brother dress and comb his hair, and wrestled playfully with him.

When Ché was nine years old, he and his brother and cousins were playing baseball under the tall pines by the Salmon River. Budhah accidentally got smacked in the head with the metal bat. His skin burst open above his eyebrow, and blood poured out. Ché walked his brother home to their white trailer house. There he put him in bed, stroked his long hair, and cared for him until the paramedic (health care worker) arrived to patch up Budhah's forehead.

Ché could forgive his cousin who had swung the metal bat. But he carried another sorrow in his heart. He missed his aunt and his brother Daniel, who had died when Ché was younger. He had called his aunt Auntie-Mom because she had been like a second mother to him. Ché didn't understand why the **Creator** had taken his loved ones to the spirit world when he needed them here on Earth.

Creator is a word some people use for God or a Higher Power.

Ché thought about the deaths of his loved ones. He remembered other hurts, too. He wanted to punch the kids at school who had made fun of him—and the teacher. Ché felt anger gnawing in his chest like a hungry bear. But the anger made his heart feel heavy.

He talked with his mother about it. "You believe in your **ancestors** and the Creator, don't you?" she asked.

Ancestors are people who came before and are now gone, such as great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents.

Ché nodded his head. He knew what he needed to do. He would fast—he wouldn't eat any food for a whole day. During this day of fasting, Ché danced and prayed to the Creator. The dust billowed around him like a cloud as his feet pounded the dirt. At the end of the day, he fell into bed. There, he had his answer. A voice as soft as feathers spoke to his heart. Ché should forgive everyone. He would let the Creator carry his burden. Suddenly, the drumbeats of his ancestors beat in Ché's chest, and his heart felt light and free.

Forgiveness—What Does It Mean?

"It is by forgiving that one is forgiven."

—Mother Teresa

Eight-year-old Maria started school three weeks later than everyone else. This was because her parents were migrant farm workers, and they had to follow the crops. In August and September they picked tomatoes. And in the spring, Maria sometimes had to quit school early so her parents could go to California to pick grapes.

It seemed to Maria that all the kids at school already had friends. She felt like the last peach on the tree, when all the others had been picked. Worse, she saw kids looking at her hand-me-down (used) clothes. A girl named Crystal pointed at the large sneakers on Maria's feet and laughed. Two other girls poked fun at Maria's dress, which was faded and worn. All the rest of the girls wore new-looking jeans or pants.

One day Maria lost her temper when Crystal made fun of her. She got so mad that she shoved Crystal into a mud puddle on the playground. Crystal cried. Then all the girls and some boys smeared mud on Maria's dress.

That night Maria cried to her mom. But her mom only said, "Maria, remember that without the rocks, the stream would lose its song. Learn to **forgive,** Maria, and you will be forgiven."

Maria went back to school. She decided to stay calm. She ignored the teasing and quietly watched the kids around her. After awhile, she saw that Crystal didn't understand her math, so Maria helped her. She helped Everett, too. At lunch, Maria shared a ripe peach with Savannah. Then, at recess, Crystal asked Maria to hold one end of the jump rope. Soon Maria stopped feeling mad and lonely.

Someone has probably treated you unkindly. Maybe someone has told a lie about you, or cheated you, or taken your friends or homework, or told you that you were stupid. Or worse. It shouldn't ever happen, but it does.

What can you do when someone is mean or hurts you? Often, the best thing is to find a way to forgive the person. When you forgive someone, you give up your hurt or angry feelings. You stop blaming the person for being unkind. Part of **forgiveness** is saying "I forgive you." But forgiveness is more than that. When you truly forgive someone, you mean what you say. You let go of the hurt or angry thoughts you have about the person. You forgive the person not just with your words, but with your heart.

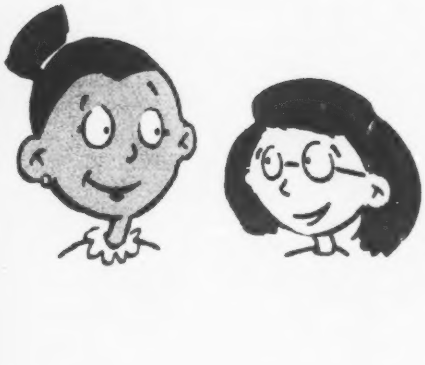
You might say, "But being mean is a bad thing to do. Why should I let someone get away with that?" Forgiveness doesn't have to mean that you do nothing when someone hurts you. You don't have to put up with it in silence, either. You can report what happened to a trusted adult, like a parent or teacher. But you can still forgive the person and leave your angry feelings behind.

When you forgive someone, you'll feel better inside. Think about it. When you're angry at someone, you might go around all day scowling, or feeling sad and grumpy. You might think about mean things to do back. What if you hurt someone back? Then you'll have something else to feel bad about. It doesn't feel very good to think mean or angry thoughts. All those bad feelings hurt you inside. They can even make you sick! Really letting go of the feelings can help you feel good inside.

"It's not that easy," you might say, and you'd be right. Becoming a forgiving person takes courage. But you'll be happier if you learn to forgive.

There are more reasons to show forgiveness to others. For one thing, people aren't as likely to pick on you anymore if they don't get a reaction. And when you forgive people, they see a new way to act. Maybe the next time they start to do something mean, they'll change their mind. Maybe they'll think about how good it felt to be forgiven.

How Can You Be Forgiving?



Sometimes before you can forgive someone you need to talk to an adult you trust. You might also need to let go of anger you're feeling. When you've done that, it's time to talk to the person who hurt you. By then, you may feel more ready to forgive the person. It's also important to forgive *yourself* when you've done something you're sorry about.

Talk to an Adult You Trust

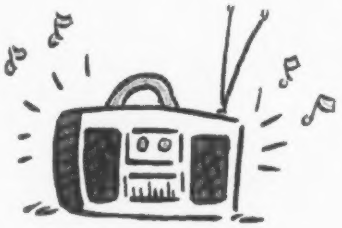
Talk about what happened with an adult such as your mom, dad, or teacher. If someone has hurt you, don't ignore it or pretend it didn't happen. If the person broke a rule at school or at home, tell your teacher or parent. If the person hurt you *without* breaking a rule, you still may want to talk about it with a grown-up. Someone you trust can help you figure out what to do so you'll feel better.

Let Your Anger Go

Trying to get even is like throwing dry wood on a fire. The angry flames will leap higher and higher. The best way to stop a fight is to *stop fighting*. The best way to stop feeling mad is to drop your anger like a hot coal. Because if you don't, that anger will hurt you even more. Anger can make you sick. It can keep you from doing good things and cause you to lose friends.

You might be thinking, "How do I let my anger go?" There are lots of things you can do to let your anger out without hurting anyone or anything. Here are a few ideas:

- Write about how you feel, or draw an "angry picture."
- Role-play what happened and how angry you feel. Do this with a grown-up you feel safe and comfortable with.
- Get involved in a sport that lets you use all your energy, like soccer, basketball, tennis, or karate.
- Take a shower or bath to feel more relaxed.
- Rest, listen to quiet music, or take a nap.
- Do something you like to do. This can calm you and help you feel better.



- Exercise! Run, jump, skip, or hop as fast and as hard as you can.
- Punch your pillow. It won't get hurt, and it won't punch you back.

The "Cooperation" chapter has other suggestions for dealing with angry feelings on pages 46–48. If you need help, ask your dad, mom, teacher, or another adult.

Talk to the Person Who Hurt You

Learning to forgive doesn't mean you'll never stand up for yourself. It doesn't mean you let people keep hurting you. Tell the person how you feel. You don't need to use mean or angry words. For example, maybe your friend told something private about you to some kids at school. You could tell your friend, "I trusted you to keep that private. Now everyone's teasing me. I feel really hurt."

If you want, you can also say what you'd like the person to do to help make things right. Sometimes this is possible, and sometimes it isn't. You could say, "I'd like you to apologize." Or, "I need you to promise that you won't do this again."

Listen to what the person says. Sometimes people can be hurtful without meaning to. Give the person a chance to explain.

Forgive the Person

You might not feel ready to forgive the person right away. When you *are* ready, say, "I forgive you." If you mean it, you should feel at peace inside. Then try to do something nice for the person. This shows that you mean what you've said. You could say, "Would you like to share my snack?" Or, "Would you like me to save you a seat on the bus today?"

IMPORTANT!

It's important to be able to forgive. But sometimes there are bigger problems in a relationship. Maybe you have a friend who's mean all the time, or one who's leading you to do things you know you shouldn't do. Maybe someone else is hurting or scaring you. When that happens, to be safe, you may need to stop the relationship. You can ask your dad or mom or another grown-up you trust to help you figure out what to do.

Will your friend always be a good friend after that? Will she or he never hurt you again? You can't make that happen. But you can decide how *you* will act. You can decide to be forgiving.

7 WAYS TO BE FORGIVING

Face what happened. Let your feelings out. Cry. Kick a can. Write or draw about it.

Open up your heart and give the person who has hurt you a chance to explain. It's possible she or he didn't mean to hurt you.

Report what happened. Tell the person who hurt you how you feel.

Get help from a trusted adult.

Imagine how the other person might feel.

Value the other person. Try to see what is good in the other person. Then do something nice for him or her, if you can. This is the hardest part, but it will make you stronger.

Erase what happened from your mind. Forget it. Only remember what you learned.

Forgive Yourself, Too

What if you're the one who has hurt someone else? You can't change what's happened, but you can learn from it. And you can decide to do the right thing now. Admit what you did. Don't lie to yourself or tell yourself it really wasn't important. Tell the person you're sorry. Ask what you can do to make it right. Think about how you want to act next time. If you need help because you feel bad or don't know what to do, talk to a grown-up you trust. Ask the person to help you find a way to forgive *yourself*.

WHEN YOU'RE SORRY— 5 WAYS TO FORGIVE YOURSELF

Say you're sorry.

Offer your friendship.

Repair what you did, if you can.

Resist doing it again. This can be hard, but keep trying.

Yank out your bad feelings like weeds, so there's room in your heart to forgive yourself.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. Your friend tells a lie about you. How might you forgive your friend and stop the lie, too?

2. Your brother steals some money from your bedroom. You ask him to stop, but he keeps on stealing. What might you do to help him stop stealing? What can you do to help yourself forgive him?

3. One day, you get really angry at your best friend. Without thinking, you say something that hurts her feelings. You see the look on her face, and you wish you could take back every word. You do your best to apologize, and your friend says, "That's okay. No big deal." But you can't get that look out of your mind. And you can't believe you said those awful words to someone you care about. Your friend has forgiven you. How can you forgive yourself?

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here are two books to help you understand and deal with feelings that can hurt you inside and make it hard to forgive yourself and others:

Don't Rant and Rave on Wednesdays! The Children's Anger-Control Book by Adolph Moser, Ed.D. (Kansas City, MO: Landmark Editions, 1994). This book gives ideas on accepting and handling anger. Ages 6–9.

Don't Pop Your Cork on Mondays! The Children's Anti-Stress Book by Adolph Moser, Ed.D. (Kansas City, MO: Landmark Editions, 1988). **Stress** is worry that won't go away and that makes you feel bad. This is a fun book that looks at what causes stress and what stress does to you. Gives ideas on how you can keep stress from happening—and how to handle it when you can't. Ages 6–9.

"One of the secrets of a long and fruitful life is to forgive everybody everything every night before you go to bed."

—Ann Landers

More Ways to Learn to Be Forgiving

Here are some activities you can do to help you be able to forgive others—and yourself.

Unscramble an Important Idea

Solve this two-part puzzle and learn something important about forgiveness.

First, unscramble the letters to read a message. (The solution is at the bottom of the page.)

GOFIRNSEVES SI A EYK OT FENPSLUCESEA.

Next, think about what the message says. Do you think it's true? Why or why not? Explain your ideas to someone in your family or to a friend or classmate.

Start a "Here's What I Can Do" List

Here's what you'll need:

- Paper and pen or pencil

Do certain things push your "anger button"? At the top of a sheet of paper, write a few things that lead you to anger. You might use these starter ideas:

- I get mad when my friend . . .
- I get mad when my mom (or dad) . . .
- I get mad when my sister (or brother) . . .

Beneath your sentences, write, "Here's what I can do to control my anger." Write ideas for letting go of angry feelings. You'll find some ideas in this chapter and in the chapters on "Cooperation" and "Fairness." You can also talk to other adults and kids about ideas for getting rid of angry feelings.

FORGIVENESS IS A KEY TO PEACEFULNESS

I get mad when my stepmom makes me go to bed early.

Here's what I can do to control my anger:

Count to 10 and take deep breaths.
Remember not to yell and cry.
Talk to her and my dad together about it.

Find Words of Forgiveness

Think of words you can use to show forgiveness. Think of as many different things as you can. If you like, do this activity with a friend or with someone in your family. You might even want to role-play (act out) scenes where you could use the words. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Words for talking about what happened:
"You're nice to me when we're alone. I wish you'd act the same way when other people are around, too."

Words for forgiving someone else:
"I know you're sorry. I'm not mad anymore."

Words for forgiving yourself:
"I've learned from my mistake."

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Draw What Happens

Here's what you'll need:

- Drawing paper
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers

Draw pictures of good things that can happen when people show forgiveness. You might show two friends working on a project together instead of doing it alone. Or a family talking and laughing at supper instead of sitting silent and angry while they eat. You can think of other ideas. Hang your pictures someplace where they can remind you to be forgiving.

Read Stories About Forgiving

Footprints Up My Back by Kristi Diane Hall (New York: Atheneum, 1984). A young girl who finds it impossible to say no is too quick to excuse the selfishness of others. She learns to be dependable without letting others use or hurt her. Ages 9–12.

Forgive the River, Forgive the Sky by Gloria Whelan (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999). A child cures her own hurt by helping an injured ex-pilot to break down his wall of anger. Ages 9–12.

I Did It, I'm Sorry by Caralyn Buehner (New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1998). A fun book of stories about animals who make mistakes and have to figure out what to do to fix things. Ages 4–8.

Lone Wolf by Kristine L. Franklin (Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 1997). Perry's sister has died and his parents have divorced. Alone and unhappy, Perry lives with his dad. A new family moves in next door, reminding Perry of things he wants to forget. His friendship with the oldest girl helps him learn to accept and forgive his family. Ages 9–12.

Tough Loser by Barthe Declements (New York: Puffin, 1996). Nine-year-old Jenna cares for new puppies. She also tries to help her older brother overcome his temper, which threatens to ruin his chances of becoming a hockey star. Ages 9–12.

Claudia Montes

Someone Who's Honest

Claudia Montes—Tortillas and Candy
Chiuhua, Mexico

When Claudia Montes was eight years old, her mother asked her to go to the store and buy some warm tortillas for the family's dinner. She gave Claudia **pesos** to buy them with. Claudia stuffed the pesos in her pocket and opened the door of her two-room **adobe** house. Behind the house, beautiful mesquite trees grew across the lavender hills. She skipped along the dirt road, while the sun shone down on her black hair.

The store was a small house with one room for selling tortillas and candy. The woman told Claudia she'd have to wait a few minutes for warm tortillas. Claudia eyed the candy. It looked so tasty! She wrapped her fist around the pesos in her pocket. Why not buy the candy instead and make up a story to tell her mother?

Pesos are a type of money used in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries.

An **adobe** house is made of clay or sun-dried earth.

Claudia's mouth watered as she pointed at some sugary suckers and red-hot candies. She spent all of the money on candy. It tasted yummy, but on the way home, she didn't feel happy inside.

When Claudia opened the door to her adobe house, her mother asked her, "Where are the tortillas?"

Claudia hid the candies behind her back, but she couldn't lie. Instead, she told the truth. Her mother told Claudia to stand beside the house to think about it. Claudia didn't mind standing beside the house, because she was glad she had told the truth. She felt much better.

A year later, when Claudia was at her school, San Francisco Y Madero, her honesty was tested again. While the teacher was out of the room, a boy placed a sack of apricots on the teacher's desk as a gift. One of the boys near the front grabbed the sack and broke an apricot in half. He laughed and stuffed the fruit in his mouth. Then he passed the plastic sack around, and other kids grabbed apricots, broke them in half, and shared them. The boy who brought the apricots said nothing, probably because he didn't want the kids to make fun of him.

Claudia watched, but she didn't take any apricots. "This isn't honest," she thought.

When the teacher came in, he didn't know what had happened, because he never saw the bag.

But Claudia spoke up. "They ate your apricots," she told the teacher. She told the whole story in front of the class.

Claudia's classmates lied and told the teacher they hadn't eaten any. They said that Claudia had eaten some apricots. Claudia's cheeks burned. She knew it was right to tell the truth, but she felt terrible.

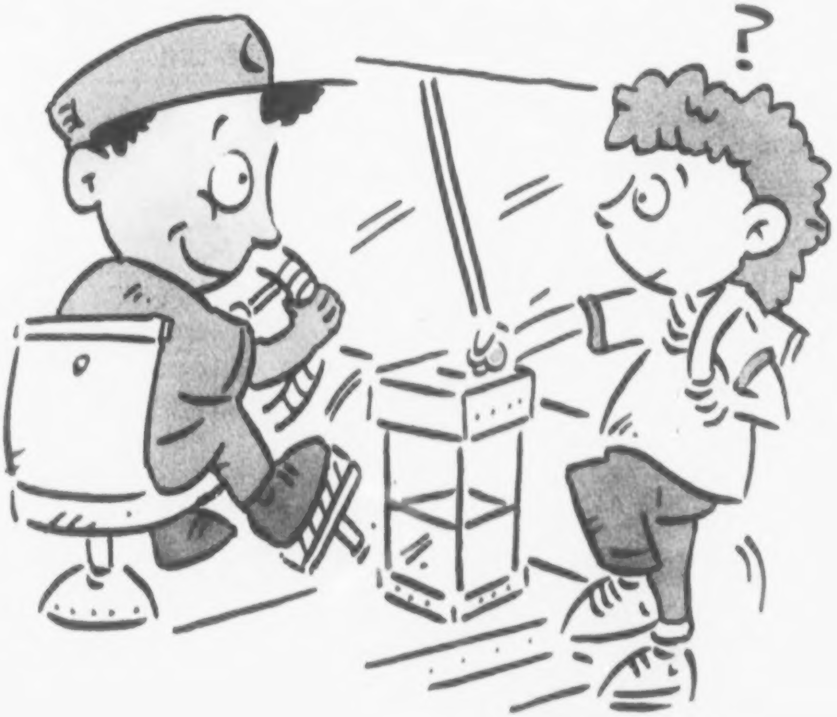
The teacher punished the whole class. For the next few days afterward, some of Claudia's friends ignored her. Others asked her why she told on them. Some kids refused to play with her. But Claudia didn't worry. She still had friends who respected her. Claudia understood something important: Even though telling the truth can sometimes lead to trouble, inside it hurts less than telling a lie.

Honesty—What Does It Mean?

"Honesty's the best policy."

—*Cervantes*

When my sister Pat turned twelve, she was supposed to start paying a dime for a bus ride. The next time she road the bus, the bus driver gave her a nickel back for her dime. Pat was shy and afraid to say anything. She thought to herself, "I'm twelve now, and I should pay a dime." But she *didn't* tell the driver.



Instead she went home and asked our father what he would do. Dad answered, "I'm not going to do anything. It's up to you. You could probably keep paying a nickel for a long time without anyone knowing it." Dad patted her shoulder and said, "The bus company won't go broke from losing your nickels. But the way I look at it, I'm not sure it's worth it to sell your **honesty** for a nickel."

The next time my sister boarded the bus, she handed the bus driver fifteen cents—a dime for that day and a nickel for the other time.

That was many years ago, and my father has long since died. Recently I went to a bank drive-up window and gave the bank teller a check for $1,500 to put in my savings account. The busy woman made a mistake and gave me two things: a receipt for $1,500 *and* $1,500 in cash. Now my account had $1,500, and I had another $1,500 in my hand. By accident, the clerk had doubled my money! But in the back of my mind, I remembered my father's words. And I said to myself, "No, Dad. I wouldn't sell my honesty either—not for a nickel, and not for $1,500." I gave the money back to the teller.

These stories tell you something about what it means to be **honest.** When you're honest, you don't steal. You don't cheat other people, even if *they* make a mistake, not you. Being honest also means that you don't lie—you're always truthful.

Is it always easy to be honest? No. In the end, though, being honest is the right thing to do for yourself and for the people around you.

"When in doubt, tell the truth."

—Mark Twain

6 GOOD REASONS TO TELL THE TRUTH

1. Telling the truth lets everyone know what really happened.
2. Telling the truth keeps people from being blamed for something they didn't do.
3. You usually get into less trouble when you tell the truth than when you get caught lying.
4. Your friends, family, and teachers will trust and respect you more if you tell the truth.
5. It's easier to tell the truth. You don't have to remember a bunch of lies to keep your story straight.
6. Telling the truth helps you to feel calm and peaceful inside.

How Can You Be Honest?

There are three important things to think about when it comes to being honest: being truthful, being the real you, and being **trustworthy.**

Be Truthful

You probably know what it means to lie outright. If you cut your sister's bangs and then tell your dad, "I didn't do it," that's a lie. If you steal candy from the store and tell your friend you paid for it, that's a lie. If you didn't do your homework but tell the teacher you accidently lined the birdcage with it, that's a lie. You know it's wrong to tell lies—even if the truth will get you in trouble.

But sometimes people tell "little white lies." Even though it's small, a teeny-tiny lie is still a lie, just like a lie that's a big whopper.

Suppose your teacher tells you that if you read each night for fifteen minutes, you'll get a star on your chart at school. What if you forget to read your book one night? Is it okay to tell the teacher that you read it anyway? "After all," you might think, "it's only a little lie. I can probably read fifteen minutes extra some other night to make up for it. No one will know the difference, will they?" The truth is, your teacher may not know, but *you'll* know.

There's always one person who's hurt by a "little white lie." That person is you. Each time you lie, it gets easier to lie the next time. Each time you tell the truth—even when it's really hard to do—your truth muscles get stronger. That makes it easier to tell the truth the next time.

> **"That's one of the troubles with a lie.**
> **You've got to keep adding to it to make it believable to people."**
> ***—Bertrand R. Brinley***

You might be thinking, "Does that mean I should tell my grandma I don't like the jacket she gave me for my birthday?" That's a good question. There are times when the most important thing is to be kind. Even then, you don't have to lie. For example, maybe you don't like the jacket even though it's your favorite color, green. You could say, "Thanks, Grandma. Green's my favorite color."

Be Genuine

Being **genuine** means being the real you. When you're genuine, you *are* what you *say* you are. You don't take your brother's trophy he won at the town bike race and tell everyone he's the world biking champion. You don't tell your teacher that you wrote a poem yourself when really your sister is the one who wrote it. You don't tell your new friend that your dad died when the truth is that he and your mom are divorced and he lives in another city.

Being genuine means that you don't live a lie. The *real* you is the one people see and hear. Sometimes people have a hard time being themselves. They're afraid other people won't like them. But people who care about you want to know the real you. They want to know they can trust you to be what you say you are. This lets them act like themselves around you. It lets *them* be real, too.

Be Trustworthy

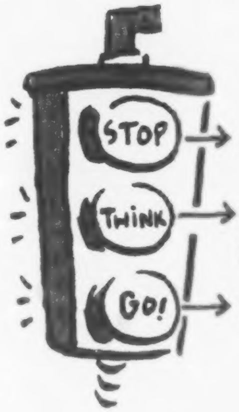
If you tell your mom you'll make your bed before you go to school, and you do it, she'll know she can trust you. If you tell your teacher you'll bring a pencil to school each day, and you do it, he'll know he can trust you. By doing what you say you'll do, you earn your mom's and teacher's trust. "But wait," you might say. "What's that got to do with honesty?" Everything. Because being trustworthy means keeping your word. It means you do the best you can to do the things you promise to do.

Being trustworthy means that people can count on you to do the things you say you'll do. When you're trustworthy, your parents, teachers, and youth leaders will respect you. As their respect grows, they'll probably give you more privileges. Your friends will respect you more, too, because they'll know they can count on you.

"Friends gotta trust each other . . .
cause ain't nothin' like a true friend."

—Mildred D. Taylor

Before you make up a story or answer a question with a lie, play "Stop! Think! Go!"



Don't say anything for a moment or two.

What really happened? What might happen if you don't tell the truth?

Go ahead and speak the truth.

6 WAYS TO BE AN HONEST PERSON

Hold on to the real you. Make sure your family, teachers, and friends know that you're genuine—always truthful about who you are.

Own up to mistakes that you make, even if you're afraid you'll get in trouble. Remember that lying leads to even more trouble.

Never keep silent when it's important to tell the truth. When you know about a lie and don't say anything, you're letting the lie live on. Turn a silent lie into a loud truth by speaking up.

Earn people's trust by keeping your promises to them and by never cheating or stealing. Take back anything you borrow, and never take anything without asking.

Stop and think about what really happened so you can tell it truthfully. Also think about what might happen if you *don't* tell the truth.

Tell your dad or mom, your teacher, or another adult you trust that you've made a promise to always tell the truth.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. At a grocery store, you pay the cashier for some ice cream, and he gives you back too much change. There's a long line of people waiting, and you can tell the cashier wants you to hurry. Should you tell him and return the extra change? Would it depend on how much money you got back? Would you tell him if he gave you a nickel too much? A dollar? Ten dollars? How would you decide?

2. Your mom and stepdad don't like you or your brother to eat candy without permission. You know that your brother has a sack of candy hidden in the corner of his closet. He tells you that if you'll keep his secret, he'll share the candy with you. Should you go along and enjoy the candy? Not take any candy and say nothing? Speak up to your mom and stepdad? Since you're not the one hiding the candy, does it matter if you say nothing? Why or why not?

3. Your older sister has a fancy, expensive watch she bought with money she earned from her part-time job. She lets you wear the watch to school for a party. Your friends think it's your watch, and they're impressed. They gather around you and look at you with wide eyes. Someone says, "You must be rich to have a watch like that." You know you're not rich, but it feels good to have everyone think so. What will happen if you tell the truth? If you don't? Does it matter in a case like this? Why or why not?

> **"Anastasia wasn't crazy about telling lies, even to herself; she did it, sometimes, but it always gave her a stomachache."**
>
> ***—Lois Lowry***

More Ways to Be Honest

Here are some activities you can do to find more ways to be honest.

Talk About "Living a Lie"

Have you ever heard the phrase "to live a lie"? Talk with your family about what it might mean. Start by thinking of examples of *how* people might live a lie. (For instance, someone who's not a fast runner might claim to be one. Someone might say he or she has been to Africa when this isn't true.) Then talk about all the reasons *why* someone might make up a story like this. What could happen when other people start to ask questions about the story? What can happen to your body and your mind if you try to live a lie?

Ask your parents if they ever lived a lie when they were younger. What happened? How did they feel? How far did it go? How could they have been honest instead?

(This is a good activity for a family meeting. To learn about starting family meetings, see "Have Family Meetings," pages 37–38.)

Watch TV Commercials

Can you trust everything you see and hear on television? With a parent or another adult, spend an hour watching TV. Focus on the commercials. Are they honest? Use questions like these to judge how honest each commercial is:

- What extreme words does the ad use? (Listen for words like *perfect, never, only, always,* and *the best.* There's usually not just one product that's best, even if a company claims that its is.)
- Does the ad offer proof about how great the product is? Does it say what expert (such as a doctor or an athlete) tested the product? Is it an expert you can trust?

- Does the ad give any warnings about the product? (For example, "This toy has tiny parts that small children can choke on.") Should it?
- What else do you notice about the ad's honesty?

Read Fables About Honesty

Fables are stories that have been told to children for a very long time. A fable usually teaches a lesson. "The Honest Woodman," "The Indian Cinderella," and "The Boy Who Cried 'Wolf'" are three fables that teach about honesty. You'll find others, too, depending on what book of fables you read. As you read, think about questions like these:

- How was the story important to people in the past?
- Why is the story important to you now?
- What other character traits does the story teach about?
- Does the story lead you to want to work on being more honest? In what ways?

FIND OUT MORE . . .

The Children's Book of Virtues **by William J. Bennett (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995). This is a recent version of some fables and tales, including "The Honest Woodman," "The Indian Cinderella," and "The Boy Who Cried 'Wolf.'"**

Read About Honest People in Real Life

Read about real people who were (or are) known for being honest. Ask your parents or grandparents, your teacher, a leader or teacher at your place of worship, or a librarian or media specialist for ideas.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Two famous Americans who were known for their honesty were Abraham Lincoln (known as "Honest Abe") and George Washington. Check out these books about Lincoln and Washington:

Abe Lincoln Goes to Washington, 1837–1865 by Cheryl Harness (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 1997). Tells of Lincoln's life in Congress and as president during the Civil War. Includes maps and illustrations. There's also an earlier book about Lincoln by the same author: ***Young Abe Lincoln: The Frontier Days, 1809–1837*** (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 1996). Ages 6–12.

Honest Abe by Edith Kunhardt (New York: Mulberry Paperback Books, 1998). Tells the story of Abraham Lincoln's life from when he lived in a log cabin to when he went to the White House. Ages 4–8.

Crossing the Delaware: A History in Many Voices by Louise Peacock (New York: Atheneum, 1998). Read about Washington's role in the Revolutionary War through the stories of a soldier and writings of the time. Though the reading level is for ages 9–12, all ages will enjoy this book.

From Colonies to Country with George Washington by Deborah Hedstrom (Sisters, OR: Multanomah, 1997). Booming cannons, whispered death plots, and a submarine make the Revolutionary War a reality. This book is part of the "My American Journey" series. Includes collector cards, a character-development booklet on leadership, and copies of 1776 documents. Ages 10 and up.

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Write Your Own Fable

Make up your own fable about honesty. You could make something up right from the start, or you could rewrite a fable you know. For example, a fable called "The Girl Who Cried 'Fire!'" could be based on "The Boy Who Cried 'Wolf.'" Can you think of others? You can write the fable on your own, with a friend or classmate, or with someone in your family.

> **"A lie comes back sooner or later."**
>
> ***—African proverb***

Read Stories About Honesty

Angel in Charge by Judy Dalton (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1985). When Angel's mom goes on vacation, everything falls apart. Angel lies about things to her mother and her teacher, fearing she and her brother might be put in a foster home. Ages 8–10.

A Day's Work by Eve Bunting (New York: Clarion Books, 1997). Francisco helps his grandfather find work as a gardener by lying about his grandfather's skills. Grandfather's strong sense of honesty sets things straight. Ages 5–8.

Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine by Evaline Ness (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1987). Sam keeps telling wild stories ("moonshine") until they get her friend and her cat into trouble. Ages 4–8.

213 Valentines by Barbara Cohen (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1991). When Wade is put in a fourth-grade class for gifted and talented kids, he doesn't adjust very well. He decides to send himself 213 valentines signed with the names of famous people. Ages 7–10.

Your Move, J.P. by Lois Lowry (New York: Dell, 1991). J.P. goes out of his way to impress his new "crush." Things get complicated after a simple lie gets out of control. Ages 9–13.

Zach Zirkle (left) and his brother Isaiah

Someone Who Cares About His Brother and Friend

Zach Zirkle Protects His Brother
Spokane, Washington

Eight-year-old Zach Zirkle wound up his arm and shot a snowball straight into the middle of a group of neighbor kids. They all had joined together for a snowball fight in the deep snow in front of Zach's house. Zach's older sister and his seven-year-old brother Isaiah joined in the fun. Isaiah and Zach shared a bedroom and were best friends. Although Zach and his brother were the youngest kids throwing snowballs, they aimed straight and hit their targets.

But the fun soon turned mean. Isaiah teased the older kids, claiming they couldn't throw as straight as he could. The two oldest, biggest kids got mad. They charged at Isaiah, knocked him into the snowbank, and began kicking him in the back and ribs.

Zach's older sister screamed at them to stop. The other kids watched in shock, but the two bullies kept on with their cruel kicking and beating. Zach's sister ran into the house to find her mother.

Zach jumped at the bullies and tried to knock them off his little brother. He grabbed their arms and waists and yanked. Since the bullies were big fifth and sixth graders, they only laughed and shoved Zach to the ground.

Zach heard Isaiah gasp and cry out with choking sobs. The small boy couldn't get away from the repeated kicks of the bullies' heavy boots.

Zach paused just a second. Then he pulled himself to his hands and knees, crawled over to Isaiah, and threw his body over his little brother. He cradled his arms and legs around Isaiah to shield him from the terrible beating. The heavy kicks landed on Zach's sides and back instead. He closed his eyes and gritted his teeth against the painful blows.

Then something strange happened. After a few more heavy kicks, the two bullies backed off. Surprised at what Zach had done, they turned and ran away.

Zach tried to lift his little brother, but Isaiah could hardly move. Since Zach was ten pounds heavier than Isaiah, he was able to pull his brother up. Isaiah whimpered. Zach put his little brother's arm around his own neck and half carried, half dragged Isaiah to the house, where their mom and sister hurried out to meet them.

Isaiah had many bad bruises on his back and ribs from the attack but, because of Zach, he didn't have more serious injuries. Zach's great love for Isaiah gave him the courage to take the blows for his little brother and best friend.

Vicious means dangerously cruel and hurtful. When someone does something vicious, he or she wants to hurt someone very badly.

IMPORTANT!

What the older kids did to Isaiah was **vicious.** It was against the law. When people hurt others like this, they need help. Maybe you or someone you know is being hurt in this way. Or maybe you've hurt someone or are afraid you might. It's important to talk to an adult you trust. Tell the person what's happening or what you're worried about. This is an important thing you can do to keep yourself and others from being hurt.

Relationship—What Does It Mean?

"Never again fail to come to the aid of someone we love."

—Robert Joseph Burch

In 1996, a three-year-old boy fell into a gorilla cage at the Brookfield Zoo. He didn't mean to. He climbed an 18-foot railing and toppled into the cage. When he landed, he was knocked out. A mother gorilla named Binti Jua was carrying her baby on her back. She hurried over to the boy, picked him up, and cradled him in her arms. Then she carried him over to the cage door and gently placed him on the floor. She stood there and protected him from the other gorillas until a zoo worker came and took the boy out.

It's natural for mothers to love and protect their own babies. But zoo visitors were surprised at what the mother gorilla had done for a human child. No one could find out why she did that, because it's hard to talk to a gorilla.

You probably first learned about love from your mother or another person who cared for you when you were very young. The closeness between you and this loving person was your first **relationship.** As you grew, you formed ties with other people in your **family,** with people who cared for you, and with people in your neighborhood, school, community, and place of worship.

Today, you have relationships with many people. Two of the most important kinds of relationships you have are with your family and your **friends.** In this chapter, you'll learn ideas for starting and building strong relationships with family and friends. You'll also look at a third relationship—the one you have with yourself.

IMPORTANT!
What if you don't feel loved and cared for? If you don't feel that you have a safe and loving relationship with at least one adult, seek help from another adult you trust. This might be a relative, neighbor, teacher, school counselor, or youth leader. Keep looking until you find someone to help.

How Can You Build Strong Relationships?

Forming good relationships with family and friends will help you be a more happy, peaceful person. Relationships work two ways, so your friends and family will probably feel happier and more peaceful, too.

One of the best ways to build relationships is by spending time together. The next few pages are full of ideas for ways you can spend time with family and friends. As you try the ideas, keep in mind what you're learning about building your character muscles. All of the character traits in *Being Your Best* can help you have fun and get along with your parents, brothers and sisters, and friends. Traits like honesty, caring, cooperation, and respect help you be a better friend and family member.

If there are problems in one of your relationships, take time to talk them over. Remember to listen, share your feelings, and work to find a way to fix what's wrong. (To learn more about solving problems, see "Use TALKS to Solve a Problem" on pages 45–46.)

Have Fun with Your Family

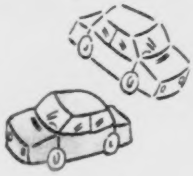
"It isn't walls and furniture that make a home. It's the family."

—Natalie Savage Carlson

What makes a family? A family is the person or people you live with. People in a family love and take care of each other. You might live in one family, or you might live in two. Your family might have lots of people, or just a few. Moms, dads, stepparents, guardians, foster parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents, sisters, brothers, cousins, special friends—any of these might be part of your family. Some families include people of different races and colors. Family members don't always live together. But even if you're away from people in your family, you can still have a relationship.

Whether your family is big or small, you can help build a strong relationship if you take time to have some fun together. Here are some ideas:

- Play games together. Some families like board games, card games, charades, or Twenty Questions. It can be fun to learn new games together, too.
- Make yourselves into a human sculpture by wrapping your arms and legs together.
- Make trails for miniature cars all through your home or around the yard. Play with the cars together.



- Play ball, tag, or hide-and-seek.
- Tell stories. Ask your grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles to tell you what it was like when they were young.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Check out this book for a collection of great stories your family can enjoy together:

Hey! Listen to This: Stories to Read Aloud **edited by Jim Trelease (New York: Penguin USA, 1992). This book has fifty read-aloud chapters from books like *Charlotte's Web, Ozma of Oz, Ramona the Pest, James and the Giant Peach,* and *Gentle Ben.* Stories to share in families with kids ages 5 and up.**

- Plan a once-a-week family fun time. Watch a video together. Tell a story. Have a picnic on the patio or porch. One way to have weekly family time is with a family meeting. You can learn more by reading "Have Family Meetings" on pages 37–38.
- Bake a cake together and take it to a neighbor or a grandparent.

- Go biking, in-line skating, skiing, or swimming together.
- Hike or walk together.
- Sing or dance. Ask family adults to show you how to do "old days" dances.
- Have a pillow fight or a water fight. (The water fight is *outdoor* fun.)

- Make family rules. Believe it or not, it can be fun to do this together. You might make rule setting part of a family meeting.
- Make a family job chart. Choose the jobs each person will do. (See "Make a Cooperative Chores Chart," page 51, and "Make Family Chores Fair," pages 61–62.)
- Write a family motto. A motto is something your family stands for, such as "We're a together family," "We're a jogging family," or "We're a sing-along family."

- Plant flowers or a garden. Enjoy weeding, watering, and watching your garden grow.
- Start a family journal or photo album.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here are a few books that talk about different kinds of families and how the people in them can get along together:

Free to Be You and Me: And Free to Be . . . a Family (25th Anniversary Edition) by Marlo Thomas (Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 1998). Stories, songs, poems, and pictures in a fun-filled book for kids and their families. Ages 7–12.

Dr. Ruth Talks About Grandparents: Advice for Kids on Making the Most of a Special Relationship by Ruth K. Westheimer (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997). Dr. Ruth, who lost both her parents and grandparents when she was ten, shares many ways grandparents and kids can enjoy and learn from each other. Ages 9–12.

Families: Poems Celebrating the African American Experience by Dorothy S. Strickland (Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 1996). Illustrated poems for all children about family life by many different black writers. Ages 5–8.

In My Family/En Mi Familia by Carmen Lomas Garza (San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press, 1996). A book of paintings with family stories about Mexican-American family life. Written in both English and Spanish. Ages 6–10.

This Is Me and My Two Families: An Awareness Scrapbook/Journal for Children Living in Stepfamilies by Marla D. Evans and Rick Schuster (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1991). A book to use with a parent or stepparent. Ages 9–12.

7 WAYS FAMILIES CAN BUILD A STRONGER HOME

Find ways to have fun. Forgive each other when you need to, and face your problems together.

Accept each other the way you are.

Make rules together. Plan jobs and work together, too.

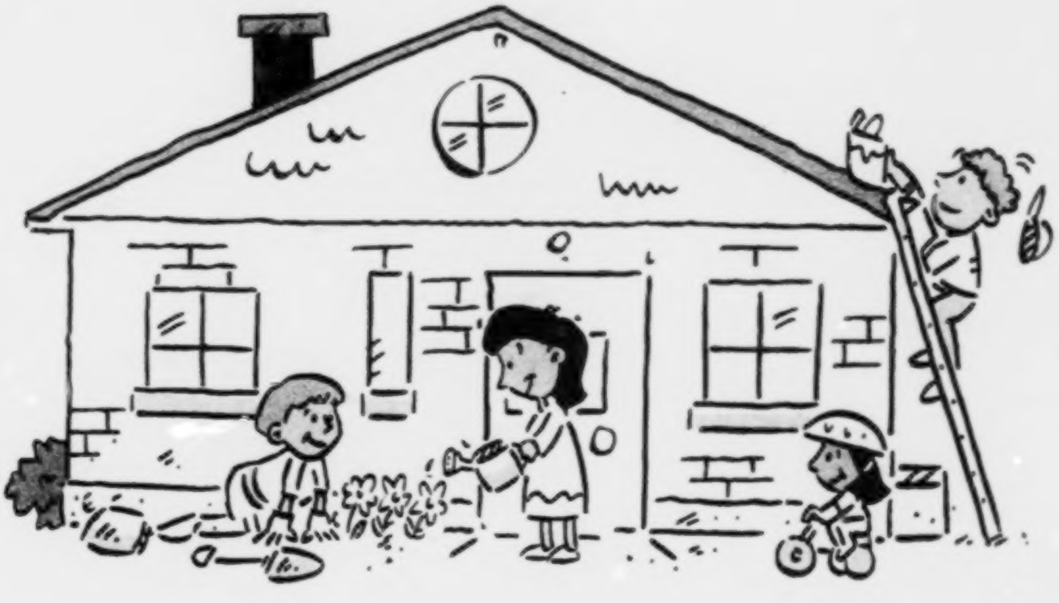
Include each other in the things you do.

Listen and talk together.

Improve together and grow.

Explore and play together.

Serve and support each other. Do kind things for each other.



Have Fun with Your Friends

"And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures."

—Kahlil Gibran

A friend is someone you care about and like to do things with. There are many different kinds of friends. You might have some friends you've known and played with since you were little and others you met at school. Maybe you have friends you see only at your place of worship or at a club meeting. You might have friends of different ages in your apartment or neighborhood. Maybe you have a brother or sister who's also a friend.

Some people have lots of friends. Others have a few close ones. Think about you. Did you take the "What's My Personal Style?" quiz on page 9? That quiz probably told you something about whether you like to be with lots of friends or just a few.

How can you be a good friend? Many of the character traits you're learning will help you do this. When you're a good friend, you care about your friend. You treat him or her kindly, and with respect. You're fair and honest with your friend. You don't say mean things behind your friend's back. You do your best to get along, and when you disagree, you try to solve your problem together. If your friend does something that hurts you, you talk about it together. Remember that the best way to make and keep friends is by being a good friend yourself.

6 TIPS FOR MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

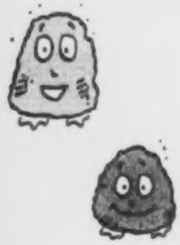
1. Be accepting. Enjoy your friends for who they are.
2. Be a good listener.
3. Develop interest in others instead of talking only about yourself.
4. Be honest.
5. When there's work to be done, do your share.
6. Reach out to get to know new people. Don't always wait for someone else to take this first step.

You have a chance to make new friends every day. And you have a chance to build your relationships with the friends you already have. One of the best ways to build friendships is by having fun together. Here are some things you and your friends might enjoy:

- Fill up an old sock with sand, tie a knot in the opening, and play catch. The more socks, the merrier—it's fun to twirl the sock and see how high it goes when you throw it. (This is *outdoor* fun, of course!)
- Chase butterflies or grasshoppers.
- Make friends with a neighbor who enjoys birdwatching. Feed the birds together. Learn their names and how to identify them.
- Make crowns out of flowers or leaves.
- Hold an arm-wrestling contest.
- Roll down hills.
- Hold a laughing contest.

"It's so much more friendly with two."

—*A.A. Milne*



- Make rock "buddies." Decorate rocks with stick-on eyes and paper feet, then paint them.
- Bake cookies and take them to your school or club to share. Or take them to someone who just moved into your apartment or neighborhood.
- Have a party where you share your favorite books or perform or listen to music together.
- With a friend, read aloud to little kids. Take turns reading, or share the reading by taking different parts or characters in the story.

> **"Tell me quick before I faint,**
> **Is we friends, or is we ain't?"**
>
> ***—Anonymous folk poem***

- Read with an older person. She or he might read to you, or you might do the reading. Ask your senior friend to tell you stories, too.
- Save seeds from fruits and vegetables. Plant them.
- Build castles of sand or snow.
- With the help of an adult, find a tree that's safe to climb. Sit in the branches and view the world together from your perch high in the sky.
- Hold a bike-riding contest where you race and do stunts. (Wear helmets, and ask a grown-up to supervise.)
- Ask an adult to take you and a friend shopping. Together, find and buy a holiday or birthday gift for a friend. Another fun idea is to window-shop (to look but not buy). Compare what things cost, choose a "fantasy" outfit, or check out the latest styles so you can make them at home.
- Learn to juggle together. Then juggle water balloons (another game for outside).
- Take baby photos to class and try to guess who's who.

- Make paper chains and hang them around your rooms.
- Rake leaves into a pile, then jump in.
- Make a scrapbook or diary of all the things you've done together.

7 BUILDING BLOCKS FOR STRONG FRIENDSHIPS

Find out all you can about each other. Be friendly, fair, and forgiving.

Respect each other and act responsibly. Remember birthdays. Read together.

Include others. Share your interests. Imagine together.

Explore and enjoy things together.

Need each other. Be nice. Never lie or be unkind.

Depend on each other. Dare to dream and develop your interests together.

Share yourself, your family, and your friends with other people. Sing together. Smile.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Check out these books for sharing with friends:

The Absolutely True, Positively Awesome Book About . . . Me!!! by Me!!! (with Help from Jessica Wilber) (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999). You and your friend might enjoy a friendship journal—a book where you write back and forth to each other. Learn more about this kind of journaling in a book written by school-age author Jessica Wilber. Though Jessica wrote the book with girls in mind, many of the ideas are great for girls _and_ boys. Ages 6–10.

That's What a Friend Is by P.K. Hallinan (Nashville, TN: Ideals Childrens Books, 1981). A short and lighthearted book about the meaning of friendship. All ages.

Have Fun by Yourself

> **"When you feel good about yourself, others will feel good about you, too."**
>
> ***—Jake Steinfeld***

Did you know that your very best friend is *you*? Take some time to get to know yourself a little better. The better you can "get along" with yourself, the better your relationships with others will be. Here are some ways to enjoy time spent alone:

- Find a quiet, secret place in your home where you can just think. Your thinking place might be up in the attic, down in the basement, outside in a tree, on the porch or patio, under your bed, or in your closet.
- Start or write in a journal. Your journal might be a book where you write your dreams and feelings. It might be a log where you keep track of baseball scores and plays. It might be a notebook where you write letters to yourself, sketch pictures, or keep lists of things to do.
- Dress up in your parents' or grandparents' old clothes.

- Practice something you want to learn, like doing magic tricks, playing the trumpet, shooting baskets, or dancing.
- Make a dough creature. You can make your own dough: Mix 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, 1 tablespoon of oil, a few drops of food coloring, and just enough water to keep the dough moist. Store unused dough in a tightly sealed plastic bag. After your creature sets (hardens), paint it with tempera paint.

- Draw or paint. Come up with your own pictures or copy something from a comic book, newspaper, or magazine. If you like, get a book from the library that shows you how to draw people, nature scenes, or building designs.
- Read. What do you like to read? Adventure series? Science fiction? Magazines on collecting things? Stories about real people (biographies)? Stories that are made up (fiction)? Comic books? Nature stories? Puzzle books? Try different things till you find something that's right for you.

"A book is a friend."
—American proverb

- Lie on your bed and listen to music. Or lie in the grass and watch clouds. Let yourself dream.
- Try a recipe from a cookbook, or make up a new recipe. How about pickles in potato pancakes? (Be sure to get permission first, and clean up the mess.)
- Make a playhouse out of boxes, sheets, and towels. Ask if you can eat your lunch in your playhouse.
- Make a basketball hoop out of an old tire or coat hanger. Have an adult or older friend help you hang it from a tree or post.
- Look under your bed. What's hiding there? It might be old socks, last week's sandwich, or a game you thought you'd lost. Clean up what you find. Then do the rest of your room.
- Start a collection of bottle caps, buttons, flowers, dolls, toy cars, or whatever interests you.
- Find out where you can take old newspapers, cans, plastic bottles, glass jars, and cardboard. Set up a recycling center for your household with boxes or sacks to save things in.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. You want to be a better friend to your sister. But she says you're a pest, and she doesn't seem to want to be friends. How might you help your sister enjoy your company?

2. You have two friends who fight over you. They each want you to be their friend alone. You want to be friends with both. Is it possible to do that? What can you do or say to your friends?

3. There's someone in your class no one wants to be around. You feel sorry for the person, but you want to be with your own friends. Is it possible for you to become friends with the person and still keep your other friends? What can you do?

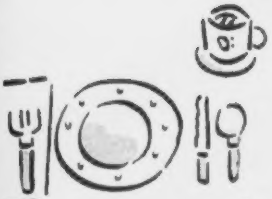
4. Your mom sends you to your room all the time. You don't like being sent to your room. What might you do to work things out better with your mom?

More Ways to Build Relationships

Here are some more activities you can do to help build strong relationships with friends and family.

Plan a "Special Guest" Dinner

Here's what you'll need:



- Paper and pens, colored pencils, or markers for making invitations and place cards
- *If you wish:* Tape recorder and cassette tape

Ask your mom or dad to help you plan a special dinner for a favorite relative or family friend. This is a nice event to plan for a grandparent. Set the date and time and send an invitation. Decide on the food and help with the shopping and cooking. Make place cards to put by each person's plate. At the dinner, ask your guest to tell stories from his or her life. If your guest doesn't mind, tape-record the stories. After dinner, share more stories or play a game together. Later, you might even want to write down one of the stories and present it to the guest.

Surprise Someone

Plan a surprise for a friend or family member. Make a bed. Wash dishes. Fold laundry. Give a small treat. Leave a note with your surprise.

Thanks for all the things you do.
Here is something nice for you.
It's now your turn to help another:
Father, mother, sister, brother.
Pass this note with your surprise
To help our family build strong ties.

From Kate

Go on a "Penny Ride"

Here's a fun activity to do with your family (you might invite a friend to come, too). Ask your dad or mom to take your family on a ride in the car. Bring along a penny. After you get on the street, take turns flipping the penny. If the penny comes up "heads," turn right at the end of the next street. If the penny turns up "tails," turn left at the next street. You can decide how many blocks to go before you flip the coin. A penny ride will take you surprising places. You can even try to get the penny to take you somewhere fun—like to the ice-cream store! (Flip the penny to decide who gets to choose where you'll go.) If your family doesn't have a car, you can take a "penny walk" together.

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Start a "What Makes a Good Friend?" List

Here's what you'll need:

- Paper and pen or pencil

What goes into being a good friend? Write down words that tell the traits of a good friend (*for example:* friendly, not jealous, honest, likes to laugh). Think of as many qualities as you can. Then go back over your list and circle the qualities *you* have. Put a check mark next to traits you need to work on. How will you practice being a better friend? Keep your list close by (maybe inside your desk, journal, or closet door) where it can remind you of what it takes to be a good friend.

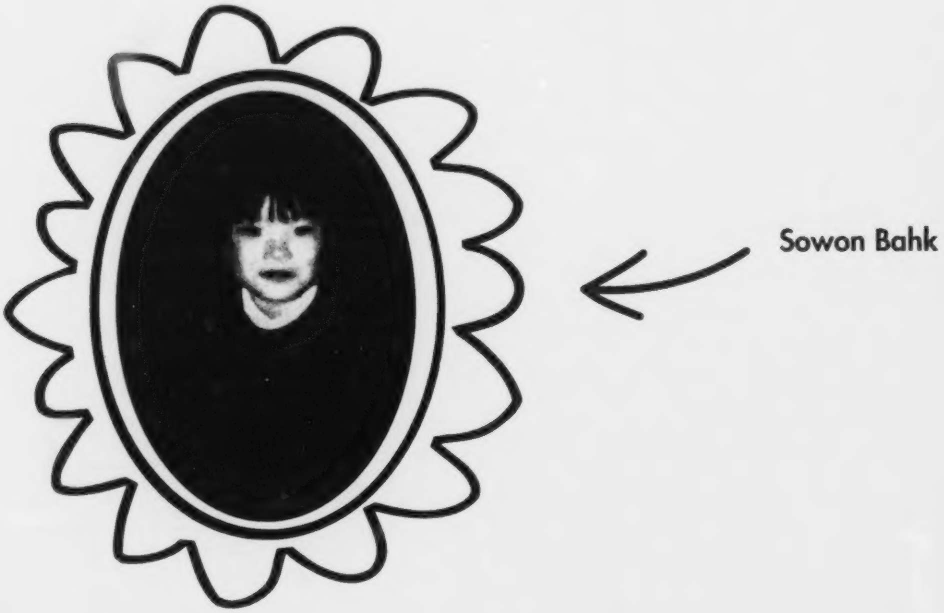
Read Stories About Relationships

Out of the Dust by Karen Hesse (New York: Scholastic, 1997). Fourteen-year-old Billie Jo survives her hard life in the Oklahoma dust bowl (when there were years with no rain) in the 1930s. Her mother dies, and the community turns against Billie Jo. Through her loss and sadness, Billie Jo learns an important truth about herself. Ages 9–12.

The View from Saturday by E.L. Konigsburg (New York: Atheneum, 1996). Four smart, shy twelve-year-olds are chosen to be on the Academic Bowl team. The book is filled with surprises as they learn about themselves and each other in this story of friendship. Ages 9–12.

Youn Hee & Me by C.S. Adler (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace, 1995). Caitlin loves her adopted Korean brother Simon. When the family learns that Simon has a sister in a Korean orphanage, they decide to adopt her, too. But Caitlin's disappointed in her new sister Youn Hee. And Youn Hee has trouble getting used to the United States. Slowly, they all come together as a family. Ages 8–12.

You're Not My Best Friend Anymore by Charlotte Pomerantz (New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1998). Two best friends live in a two-family house. When a big disagreement splits them apart, they find a way to work things out. Ages 8–10.



Someone Who Respects Herself and Others

Sowon Bahk Shows Respect to Her Elders
Chinju, Korea

Sowon Bahk was seven years old when she and six friends decided to cook rice in her apartment. The idea sounded like so much fun that Sowon forgot she wasn't supposed to cook without an adult. In the process of cooking, the kids spilled rice and water all over the counter and onto the wooden floor. Before they could clean it up, Sowon's mother came home.

Her mother was very angry. "You must all go home," she said to Sowon's friends. She sent Sowon to her room.

Later, Sowon had to go back into the kitchen to clean up the mess. She felt bad, but she didn't talk back to her mom because Sowon had learned to respect her parents.

Sowon's father taught at the university. Often, the family entertained other teachers from the United States. The visitors admired Sowon's apartment. The red brick building was surrounded by beautiful flowers—red, yellow, purple, and pink—and stood next to a gently flowing stream.

"When these people come," her father told Sowon and her brother Yongsoo, "you must shake their hands like this. And you must smile and look into their eyes. This is polite, and it shows respect."

At school, Sowon learned to respect teachers. One day, as she and her thirty-five classmates cleaned the room after school, a boy began banging a broom up and down on the floor, mashing the straw bristles. The teacher returned and punished the boy.

Sowon knew that the boy who had been disrespectful would have to work hard to earn back the teacher's trust. That would take a long time. Sowon vowed she would never show disrespect to her teachers. Instead, she would respect them and speak to them in the formal way she had been taught. Because of this, Sowon's teachers respected her, too. They allowed her to take part in many activities.

Elders are people who are older than you, like your teachers or parents.

Sowon also learned to respect her **elders.** When her family visited her Grandma Song at Christmas, she bowed before her grandmother with one knee on the ground. Her brother bowed with both knees on the ground. Then Sowon ran to her grandmother's Christmas tree to see her favorite ornament. It was a little girl with a blanket in her arms.

Sowon explains in her own words how she feels: "When I asked my mother if I could get my ears pierced, she said no. I begged, but I didn't talk back. I wouldn't do it. It's just the way we are. It's the way we live. We learn by example. If you respect other people, they'll respect you, too."

Respect—What Does It Mean?

> **"I had never cared about acceptance**
> **as much as I cared about respect."**
>
> ***—Jackie Robinson***

One day when I was in fifth grade, my teacher read some poems to us. The music and rhythm of the words marched in my head. When she finished reading, my teacher encouraged us to write our own poems. By this time, I was on fire. Eager to start, I grabbed my pencil, which flew across my paper as ideas popped like electricity in my mind. I wrote about an old Swiss watch that had always kept perfect time and then suddenly didn't. It was kind of a silly poem. I remember raising my hand several times to ask how to spell different words. My teacher grew more and more interested in what I was writing, and soon she was looking over my shoulder.

At the end of the writing period, she asked us to turn our papers in. My chest was bursting because I felt so proud of my poem. Then the bombshell hit. There, in front of the class with all my friends listening, the teacher took my paper, read through it quickly, and then looked at me with one eyebrow raised. "Where did this poem *really* come from?" she asked. "You must have memorized it and copied it from a book."

I felt crushed and embarrassed. I knew I was an honest person. I was proud of my poem, and her words stung me. At that moment I knew my teacher didn't **respect** me.

When you respect someone, you care about how the person feels. You believe that the person's ideas, thoughts, and feelings are important. You believe that he or she deserves to be treated kindly and politely.

My teacher embarrassed me. Embarrassing someone is **disrespectful**—it doesn't show respect. If the teacher thought I'd stolen the poem from somewhere else, she should have talked to me in private. I hadn't, and she didn't. I don't remember what I said to her—I only remember the hurt.

Maybe something like that has happened to you. It's okay. You can use it to learn to be stronger. I've never forgotten how that teacher treated me. Partly because of that, I'm a better teacher. I've always been careful to respect my own students and the things they write, say, and feel.

Respect is a special kind of caring. We can respect people we know well, and also people we don't know well at all. That's because part of respect is valuing people as human beings. Human beings deserve to be treated kindly and thoughtfully. You're a human being, so you deserve respect, too—from others, and from yourself.

How Can You Show Respect?

There are many ways you show respect. You show it by how you treat other people and yourself. That's right, part of respect is caring about *yourself*. You show it by caring about other living things, like animals and trees, and about the air and water living things need. You show it by following rules and laws. And you show it by paying attention to people's beliefs and customs.

Respect Yourself

You can't really respect others until you respect yourself. This means that you're nice to *you*. How? For starters, you don't say bad things about yourself or put yourself down.

Instead of saying, "I can't do it," you say, "I'll keep trying." Instead of thinking, "I'm not smart or popular," you think, "I'm good at lots of things, and I have friends who really like and trust me."

When you respect yourself, you care for your body and mind. You get a good night's sleep. You put your sweatshirt on when you go out in the wind. You eat healthy food and avoid too many sweets. You don't take drugs that your doctor didn't prescribe. You don't smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol. You wear a safety helmet when you ride a bike and a seat belt when you ride in a car. You don't take silly risks to pretend you are brave. It *isn't* brave to jump from the highest rock into a lake when you don't know what's under the water. Or to run across the street without looking for cars. Those are unsafe things to do.

It's important to respect your body, mind, feelings, and heart. If you don't respect yourself, how can anyone else?

> **"How you carry yourself, what you stand for—**
> **that's how you gain respect."**
> ***—Mildred D. Taylor***

Respect Other People

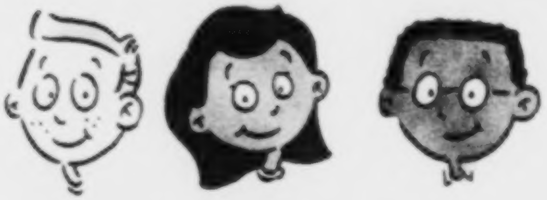
Remember to treat your family, friends, teachers, and other adults with respect. This means you let your mom sleep when she's been up late working. It means you sit down and play with your little brother for a while, even though you think his games are boring. It means you do the work your teacher assigns. It means you answer your grandpa when he talks to you. It means you listen to your friend when she's sad. Respecting others means you care about their feelings and the things they think are important.

You also show respect for others by the way you talk to them. It's good to keep in mind that your voice can sound mean even when your words don't. If you treat others with respect, they'll probably treat you with more respect, too. When you want to say something mean or sassy, zip your lips shut and count to ten. Think how the other person might feel if you let those words fly. Think how you might feel if someone said them to you.

> **"Think before you speak, and look before you leap."**
>
> **—*Irish proverb***

Respect Differences

You can get in the habit of treating *all* people with respect. Lots of people are different from you in many ways. You may know people whose race, religion, skin color, or clothing is different from yours. *Different* doesn't mean *bad* or *wrong*. Respect the differences. Try to learn more about people who aren't like you. The ways we're different make us interesting!



Use Good Manners

Did anyone ever tell you to "Remember your manners"? Manners are another way people show respect. It's respectful to speak in a kind voice and use words like "Please," "Thank you," "Excuse me," and "May I?" Good manners mean you act kindly to others, too. Maybe you offer to help carry someone's books or groceries. Maybe you open a door for someone. You show good manners in the way you eat, dress, walk, and talk.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Social Smarts: Modern Manners for Today's Kids **by Elizabeth James (New York: Clarion Books, 1996). Advice on how to handle all kinds of social and personal situations. Ages 9–13.**

Respect Property

Another part of respect is taking care of things that belong to you and other people. If you respect property, you don't write or draw on the school bathroom walls. You bring your toys and games in out of the rain so they won't be ruined. You're careful not to scratch cars that you pass on the street or in the garage, or walls and furniture at school, at the library, and at home (your home or someone else's). You put used paper in the recycling box. You take only what you need and what you'll use of everything.

Respect Nature and Other Living Things

You show respect for animals, plants, and nature by what you *do* and what you *don't* do. You *do* walk quietly past a nest of bird's eggs. You *don't* throw rocks or sticks at birds. You *do* take good care of the neighbors' hamster while they're away. You *don't* forget to clean the cage. You *do* put your gum wrapper in your pocket instead of dropping it on the ground. You *do* plant trees and water them. You *don't* peel the bark or snap off branches. You show respect for the earth all around you.

Respect Laws, Beliefs, and Customs

Following rules and laws is another way you show respect. This means you come inside from playing when your mom or dad tells you to. That's the rule. It means you don't shove in the halls at school. That's the rule. It means you don't throw rocks at windows. That's the law. It means you pay for the cool stuff you want from the store. That's the law, too.

You probably know many ways to be respectful about beliefs and customs. You can show respect for your country by standing and saying the "Pledge of Allegiance." You can show respect for your faith by learning its words, teachings, and prayers. (You can also show it by *not* talking, giggling, or laughing rudely in a place of worship.) You can show respect for other people's beliefs and customs by asking politely about them and not making fun of them.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Kids of all ages will enjoy this recording of music from cultures all around the world: *A Child's Celebration of the World* (Music for Little People, Warner Brothers Records, 1998). Find it at a local library or store, or write to Music for Little People, P.O. Box 1460, Redway, CA 95560-1460. Toll-free phone: 1-800-346-4445. Email: musicforlittlepeople@mflp.com. Web site: *www.mflp.com*.

7 WAYS TO SHOW RESPECT

Reach out to others and learn about their beliefs and customs.

Enjoy the differences among people—they make life interesting!

Show respect for rules and laws by obeying them.

Put on your best manners. Speak politely, help people, and choose kind words.

Eat right, get plenty of sleep and exercise, learn healthy habits, and respect yourself.

Care about plants and animals and the air and water that living things need.

Treat property that belongs to you and other people carefully.

7 WAYS TO SPEAK UP WHEN YOU FEEL DISRESPECTED

Sometimes, even when you try your hardest to be kind, someone else might snap at you. It's okay to stick up for yourself. Here are some ways to do it:

Stay respectful even if you don't feel respected.

Plan what you're going to say—don't just say the first thing that comes into your head.

Earn respect by caring about everyone involved. Don't get rid of your hurt by hurting someone else.

Ask for the other side of the story. Get the facts straight.

Keep your comments short and clear.

Understand how the other person feels. Sometimes people say they're mad when they're really sad, jealous, hurt, or confused. Ask questions so you understand.

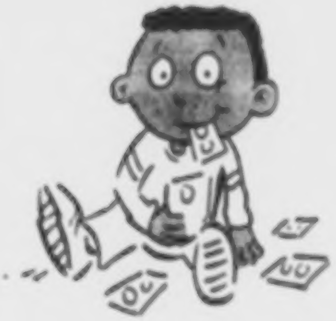
Practice good manners. Politely tell the person how you feel and what you need. Work together to find a solution.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Stick Up For Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem (Revised and Updated Edition) **by Gershen Kaufman, Ph.D., Lev Raphael, Ph.D., and Pamela Espeland (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999). Simple words and real-life examples show you how you can stick up for yourself with other kids, big sisters and brothers, even grown-ups. Ages 8–12.**

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.



1. Your three-year-old brother goes into your drawer and throws your card collection all over the floor, chewing up and tearing some of the cards. What might you do to show respect to your brother *and* help him learn to have respect for your things?

2. You're walking by the bus stop, and your friend pulls out a bright red marker and starts drawing on the bench. She hands you another marker. What might happen if you try to stop your friend from drawing on the bench? If you don't? What might you do to show your friend you respect her and help her respect public property, too?

3. The sitter is rude to you and tells you to shut your mouth and stay in your room all day. Should you do anything to help the sitter show more respect for you? If so, what? If not, why? What might happen if you do something about it? If you don't?

More Ways to Show Respect

Here are some activities you can do to find more ways to be respectful.

Throw Disrespectful Words in the Garbage

Make a list of all the bad things you have said to yourself. Maybe you've called yourself "stupid," "ugly," or "clumsy." Write down all the disrespectful things you can remember saying or thinking. When you're done, take the list and tear it up. Crumple the scraps and throw them away. Promise yourself that you're *done* saying unkind things to yourself! Promise you won't do it again. You can do the same thing for unkind words you've said to other people.

Practice Good Table Manners

Manners are magic—people respect you more when you eat politely. To learn good table manners, hold a "good manners meal." Ask an adult to show you how to eat and speak politely at a meal. Look in a cookbook or the book below for instructions on how to set the table, pass dishes, eat, and talk during your meal. If you like, your meal could be a dessert party. Use plates, napkins, and silverware along with your cupcakes, ice cream, or other goodies. Keep practicing this yummy habit.

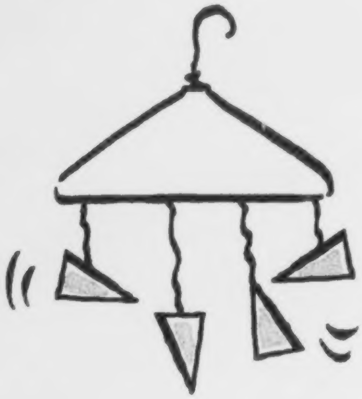
FIND OUT MORE . . .

***Soup Should Be Seen and Not Heard: The Kid's Etiquette Book* by Beth Brainard and Sheila Behr (New York: Dell, 1990). This book uses fun and humor to offer guidelines for using manners when you're eating, dressing, talking on the phone, and in other social situations. Ages 8 and up.**

Make a Respect Mobile

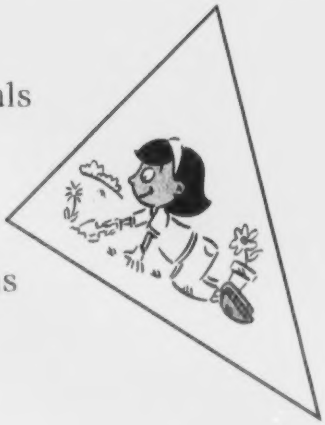
Here's what you'll need:

- Drawing paper
- Scissors
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Hole punch
- Wire or plastic coat hanger
- String



Make a mobile to hang in your room, kitchen, club, or class. Cut sheets of drawing paper in half diagonally. On each half-sheet, draw a picture that shows something about respect. Make a small hole in the top of each piece and tie one end of a string to it. Tie the other ends of all the strings to the coat hanger. Hang your mobile in your room at home, the kitchen, or your classroom. If you like, use some of the following ideas of situations where people can show respect:

- talking with others
- walking and moving around
- playing or working with animals
- eating
- listening
- thinking about yourself
- noticing other people's customs
- following rules



REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Make Family Respect Rules

As a family, talk about ways you can show respect to each other at home. What rules can you come up with that feel right to everyone? Make a "Respect in Our Family" chart and display it on a bulletin board or the refrigerator. You might want to include rules for parents, for kids, for sisters and brothers, for beliefs and customs, and for property. This is a nice activity for a family meeting. See "Have Family Meetings" (pages 37–38) to learn more about family meetings.

Read Stories About Respect

Altogether, One at a Time by E.L. Konigsburg (New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1989). A collection of four short stories about kids who learn to respect people whose race, age, body, or way of learning is different from their own. Ages 9–13.

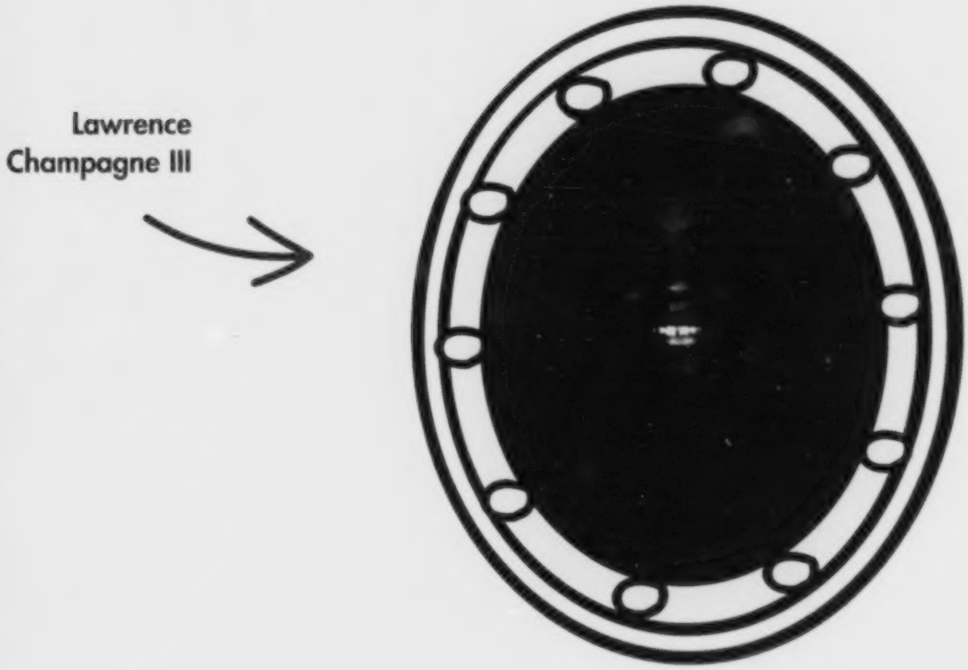
Ella Enchanted by Gail Levine (New York: HarperCollins, 1997). Determined to be herself, Ella struggles to get rid of a childhood curse that makes her obey all orders without thinking. Based on the story of Cinderella. Ages 8–12.

The House of Wings by Betsy Byars (New York: Puffin Books, 1993). Left with his grandfather until his parents are settled in Detroit, Sammy learns to respect and love him. Ages 9–12.

It's a Spoon, Not a Shovel by Caralyn Buehner (New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1995). A mother tells her child, "It's a spoon, not a shovel," in this hilarious quiz on good manners. Ages 8 and up.

Richard Wright and the Library Card by William Miller (New York: Lee & Low Books, 1997). In the 1920s, Richard Wright cannot get a library card because he's black. With the help of a friend, he finds a way to use the library, which opens up the world of books to him. A true story about the meaning of respect and self-respect. Ages 6–9.

RESPONSIBILITY



Someone Who's Responsible

Lawrence Champagne III and a Runaway Bus
St. Louis, Missouri

Lawrence (Larry) Champagne has always taken his responsibility to help other people seriously. His mom says, "He watches out for his brother and sister, and if I need anything, he helps me."

Larry helps his grandmother as well. He lifts heavy things and vacuums and scrubs floors for her. Then he hangs around his grandfather and watches him repair cars. "My grandpa taught me about driving and what to do in emergencies," Larry says. Luckily, he remembered it all, because when Larry was in the fifth grade, he took charge at a dangerous time.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Larry was peacefully sitting on the Mayflower Bus on his way to Bellerive Elementary School. His little brother sat next to him. The bus was filled with about twenty kids, ages five through ten. Larry was gazing straight ahead when he saw the bus driver's head fall to one side. The bus swerved out of control and hit the guardrail. The bus driver toppled out of her seat and landed on the boarding stairs. Larry sprung out of his seat. Kids screamed.

Larry hung onto the seats and fought his way to the front. The bus hit the guardrail again. Then a pick-up truck smashed into it, and Larry banged into a seat. Several kids toppled into the aisle. Still, the bus lurched forward. Larry pulled himself toward the front. He leaped behind the steering wheel. Stretching his foot down, he hit the brakes. The bus slammed to a stop, thrusting kids into the backs of seats. Larry and three other students tried to help the bus driver, who'd had a **stroke.** They opened the emergency exits so the frightened children could leave. Five students were injured, but because of Larry's fast action, no one was killed.

A **stroke** is a sudden loss of blood to the brain.

Larry doesn't think he did anything special. "I just did what had to be done," he explains.

His mom says, "Larry's a responsible kid. He's always putting others before himself. Now he wants to install a motion detector light outside our house. I don't think he knows much about electricity," she laughs, "but he promised to find an electrician to teach him. You can count on Larry. That's the way he is."

Responsibility—What Does It Mean?

"I learned the value of hard work and persistence from my family."

—*Michael Jordan*

When I was young, I had a large, black cat, which my sister and I named Sir Blackie Tomcat. Most of the time you think of dogs, not cats, as being animals you can **depend** on (count on). But Sir Blackie the cat was as **dependable** as the best dog. Each day as I returned from school, I would find Sir Blackie waiting patiently for me on the back porch steps. Each morning and evening, he would appear for mealtimes at the very same hour. Blackie must have known that I was dependable, too. He knew he could count on me to feed him at the same time every day.

One day, when the two of us were on the porch, a big angry dog came down our driveway, snarling at Sir Blackie. It was well known that this dog ate cats for dessert. I jumped up, yelling at the dog and waving him away. Sir Blackie never moved from his perch on the porch. He just kept purring. He must have known that he could depend on me again. And he was right. I shooed that mean dog away.

I was **responsible** for Blackie, and he must have known he could always depend on me to care for him and keep him safe.

You need to be responsible, too. A responsible person does what he or she promises to do. In that way, it's like being trustworthy. Your mom needs to know that if you tell her you'll be home at a certain time, you'll be there. If you run into a problem, you'll call her on the phone. When people know that you're responsible, they don't have to worry so much about you. Parents will usually give you more freedom, and teachers will usually give you more privileges. **Responsibility** helps you learn to be a leader—someone who starts things and keeps them going. It means taking responsibility for *yourself,* too—learning to think about choices and make good decisions about ways to act and things to do. Being responsible helps make the world a better place.

How Can You Be Responsible?

"I am the maker of my own fortune."

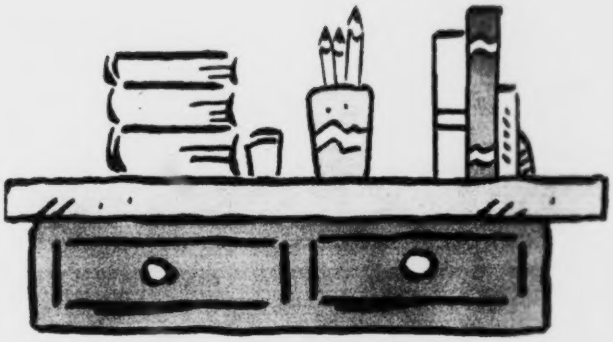
—Tecumseh

Each of us is responsible for our own actions, words, thoughts, and choices. What does this mean for you?

Your Actions

You're responsible for the good things you choose to do. Do you hand in your homework on time? Do you complete your chores at home when they need to be done? Do you take care of your own clothes or toys? Do you keep yourself healthy by eating good foods? Do you try to keep yourself safe? Do you follow rules at home and at school? Do you obey laws in your community? If you do, you're being responsible.

You also choose the way you treat the environment around you. Do you take care not to litter? Do you stop others from littering? Do you recycle paper, cans, or old socks? Do you treat animals with kindness? If you have a pet, do you feed and care for it?



Are you responsible about property? Do you vacuum carefully so you don't bang walls and furniture? Do you handle the dishes carefully when you wash them? Do you put away your books and papers so you can find them easily?

Your Words

Being responsible for your words means that when you *say* you'll do something, you follow up and *do* it. You don't make promises you can't keep. It also means that you think before you speak. You control the words that fly out of your mouth, and you can decide to say something or nothing. You can choose to use kind words or unkind words. You *can't* control the things other people say to you, but you *can* control the things you say back.

Your Thoughts

You're also responsible for the things you think about. "But wait!" you might say. "Ideas pop into my head all the time. Sometimes the ideas that come are bad ones. I can't control that." This might be true. Still, you *can* decide whether to let a bad idea stay in your mind. What can you do to get rid of it? Try ignoring it. Think about something good instead. Or change your activity. You can switch the TV channel or pick up a good book and read. You can talk to a friend or play a game with your brother or sister. Good things crowd out bad things.

IMPORTANT!

Sometimes people have so many bad thoughts they don't know what to do. If this happens to you, talk to an adult you trust. Tell the person about the thoughts that won't go away. When you find you can't change something by yourself, the responsible thing to do is get help.

Making Choices

Here's a story about making choices:

Seth, a fourth-grade boy, chose not to go straight home after school one day. A friend convinced him to stop at the grocery store to buy some soda pop. Seth thought, "It's okay. I'll only be a few minutes late."

At the store, Seth watched as his friend stuffed gum and candy bars into his coat pockets. Then he stuffed some candy into Seth's pocket. Seth started to pull the candy out, but his friend stopped him. "Don't worry," the friend said. "You won't be taking it. You didn't put the candy in your pocket—I did. So you're okay."

Seth thought, "That's right. I didn't take the candy. It's not my fault." Seth wanted to please his friend.

The boys went to leave the store. At the door, a man with a gold "Manager" label on his shirt stopped them. The store's security cameras had caught the boys stealing. Seth tried to explain that he wasn't the one stealing, but the manager didn't believe him. The police didn't either. Seth was sent to juvenile court—a court for young people. He now had a juvenile record with the police, and he had to complete twenty-five hours of community service. Seth learned the hard way that he'd better think about **consequences**—about what might happen—*before* he makes a choice.

Where do you think Seth made his first poor choice? If you answer, "When he didn't go home after school," you're right. Seth's second poor choice was staying and watching his friend steal. His third was allowing his friend to put stolen candy in his own pocket.

> **"No choice is also a choice."**
>
> ***—Yiddish proverb***

It's not always easy to make the right choice. But making good choices is part of being responsible. Here are three steps that can help you make better choices:

1. Think before you act. Before you decide to do something, think about what might happen next. Seth could have done this at any point along the way—and stayed out of trouble. He might have thought: "Why is my friend going to the store? What does he need me for? Should I call my mom first? If I don't go straight home, she'll worry about me. She might get mad. She might ground me. Maybe she won't trust me anymore . . . What if I get hurt? No one will know where I am, so no one will come to help me . . . Why is my friend putting candy in his pocket? Maybe he's stealing it . . . What if I leave the store with candy in my pocket? What if someone sees me? Will I get in trouble? Will I feel guilty? Will I respect myself? Will other people respect me?"

2. Gather the facts. There are always facts to think about. Seth might have asked: "Where's the store? How long will it take to get there? How long will it take me to walk home from there? Could I check with Mom first? What other choices do I have?" This last question can help you sort out an important fact—the choice itself. Ask yourself, "What are my choices?"

3. Decide which choice is best for *you* and the right thing to do. Seth had lots of choices. He chose to go with his friend, but he could have said no. He could have called home first. Maybe he could have asked the friend home instead. Seth wanted to please his friend, though. Because of that, Seth forgot to be responsible to *himself.* The best choice isn't always the easiest one. Still, Seth would have been better off if he'd thought, "My friend might think I'm stupid if I call my mom first, but it will be better for me if I do."

IMPORTANT!

Even though you can help other people, you are *not* responsible for things that other people say and do. And when there's no choice, you're not responsible. If an adult or someone bigger than you forces you to do something that doesn't feel right to you, you have no choice. Think about a different grown-up who can help. Talk to your dad, mom, another relative, your teacher, the school counselor, or your club, scout, or church leader.

Making good choices can help you feel better about yourself and your life. You'll be happier and healthier. You'll have friends who care about you. Your family, teachers, and other people will trust you.

3 STEPS IN MAKING GOOD CHOICES

1. Think *before* you act.
2. Gather the facts.
3. Decide which choice is best for *you* and the right thing to do.

Getting Organized

Suppose you know that you're supposed to stop by your piano teacher's after school, pick up some bread at the corner store, read a story, and feed the cat. You'll probably try to do all of those things. But many kids don't complete tasks—not because they don't want to do them but because they *forget*. They need to get organized and make a plan.

How do you make a plan? Follow these steps:

1. Write a list of all the things you need to do. (Your list might be a plan for the day, for the week, or for the weekend.) Write all the things you can think of. Then put a "1" by the most important thing. Put a "2" by the next most important thing, and so on. This will help you keep in mind what you *most* need to do. If you only finish part of the things on your list, at least you'll get the most important ones done.

2. Write down when each task needs to be done. If you're planning the day, does it need to be done before breakfast? After school? If you're planning the week, does it need to be done Wednesday? Before Friday night? Maybe your dad wants you to wash the kitchen floor by Saturday afternoon. You can do it earlier if you want.

3. Write down the things you'll need to do each job. If you have to draw a map for school, you might need a pencil, an eraser, markers, paper, and a ruler. But maybe you don't have markers. So if you write down what you need, you can remember to ask your dad or mom to help you get them.

4. Make a backup plan. You need to know ahead what you can do if your first idea doesn't work. What if you wait until Saturday morning to clean the kitchen floor and your grandma is in there making pickles? If you have a backup plan, you'll think ahead about this and maybe wash the floor on Friday afternoon after school.

HOW TO PLAN

1. Write a list of all the things you need to do.
2. Write down when each task needs to be done.
3. Write down the things you'll need to do each job.
4. Make a backup plan.

Here's an example of a plan you might write for yourself:

Number the items, starting with "1" for what's most important

Job or task	Done by when?	What I need so I can do it	Backup plan
3. Wash kitchen floor	Saturday afternoon (do that morning)	Bucket, mop, vinegar, clean rags	Ask when Nana needs the kitchen. If Saturday morning won't work, do Friday after school.
1. Read two chapters	Thursday morning (read Monday night)	Remember to bring home that book!	Read Tuesday night if Monday's game runs late.
2. Scoop out kitty litter	Monday, Wednesday, Friday (do before school)	Scoop, fresh litter	Do right after school if no time in morning.

6 WAYS TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE CHOICES

Consider what might happen—think before you act.

Help yourself be responsible by getting and staying organized.

Obey rules and laws in your home, school, and community.

Ignore bad ideas that pop into your head. Change what you're doing or think about something good instead.

Choose the choice that's best for you and for others—the one that feels right inside.

Earn people's trust by showing that they can count on you.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. It's your turn to set the table, but you also have two pages of math to do. It's late, and you don't think you have time to do both. Should you ask your little brother to set the table so you can do your math? Should you set the table and forget your math? How would you handle this and be responsible?

2. Your teacher asks you to get a book from the public library to bring to class tomorrow. You say you will, but when you get home, your parents are too busy to drive you to the library. You get angry because you think your parents are making you look like you're not responsible—you don't have the book, and you've become upset. What might be the responsible thing for you to do? How might you avoid having the same problem again?

3. You're walking to a band concert where you're going to play the French horn. It takes about twenty minutes to get from your home to the school. When you're halfway there, you realize that you forgot your music. You promised you'd be on time for the practice before the concert, but you need your music, too. The practice begins in ten minutes. What would be the responsible thing to do?

More Ways to Be Responsible

Here are some activities you can do to find more ways to be responsible.

Make a "Who's Responsible?" Chart

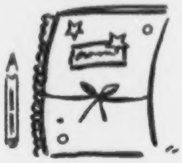
Here's what you'll need:

- Chart paper
- Marker
- Self-stick notes

Make a chart of tasks or jobs that need to be done at home. Maybe you'll make a chores chart. Maybe you'll chart who'll do what to get ready for a camping trip or to complete a family project. Across the top, make three columns and write "What?," "Who?," and "Done." On the left side of the chart paper, list the tasks that need to be completed. You can write the family names on self-stick notes and stick them in the spaces to show who'll do which jobs. After finishing a job, the person can move the note with his or her name on it to the "Done" column.

For more ideas on planning choices, see "Make a Cooperative Chores Chart" (page 51) and "Make Family Chores Fair" (pages 61–62).

Make a Choices Log



Here's what you'll need:

- Notebook and pen or pencil
- *If you wish:* Materials for decorating your notebook (such as paints, markers, colored pencils, pictures cut from magazines, glue stick, ribbon, and stickers)

A log is a kid of list, diary, or journal. When you write in it, you tell the date and describe something that happened. Make a "Choices Log" to keep track of times when you made choices you felt good or not-so-good about. (*Examples:* Maybe you chose a healthy snack instead of a candy bar. Maybe you chose to break a rule during a game at school.) For each entry, think about these questions:

- What happened?
- Did you make the right choice? Explain.
- If you *did* make the right choice, was it hard or easy? Why? If you *didn't,* why did you choose as you did?
- How did you feel about the choice you made? How do you feel about it now?
- What did you learn that will help you in the future?

Make Your Own Daily Planning Calendar

Here's what you'll need:

- Three-ring notebook or cardboard binder with metal fasteners
- Label and marker
- 12 copies of "My Daily Plan" on page 135 (*Hint:* Copy the form at 110% for the best fit in your three-ring notebook.)
- Hole punch
- Pencil and eraser

- *If you wish:* Materials to decorate the notebook or binder (such as markers, ribbon, glitter glue, buttons, and other items)

1. On the copies of the form, write the name of each month in the space provided. Then number the days from the first day of the month. (Your parent, older brother or sister, or teacher can help you do this.)

2. Put the forms inside the folder or binder. Use a marker to label the outside of the planning calendar.

3. Start with the present month and write the homework, lessons, sports, chores, or other activities you will do each day. Write in pencil so you can erase if something changes.

Make a habit of checking your calendar each day and checking off, adding, or changing items so you'll always be up to date.

Volunteer with Your Club or Family

One of the best ways to help others is by volunteering to do a job once a week or once a month. This is a great chance to do something with a club or group you're in, or with your family. There are lots of things you could do. How about reading to younger kids for story hour at the library? Serving ice cream or helping with games at a health care center? Handing out or collecting programs for a religious service? To find out how to get started, check with the organization where you want to help (such as the library, senior center, or place of worship). Local newspapers often list volunteer opportunities, too.

When you agree to volunteer on a regular schedule, it's important to go every time and be on time. If you're sick or can't go, call ahead so another volunteer can be found.

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

Read Stories About Responsibility

Earthquake Terror by Peg Kehret (New York: Puffin Books, 1996). When twelve-year-old Jonathan goes camping in northern California, an earthquake hits. Jonathan must find a way to keep his partially paralyzed younger sister, himself, and the dog alive until help arrives. Ages 8–12.

If You Had to Choose, What Would You Do? by Sandra McLeod Humphrey (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995). A good book for figuring out how to make responsible choices. Ages 4–8.

Jamaica's Find by Juanita Havill (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986). Jamaica finds a stuffed dog on the playground and has to decide whether to seek out the owner or keep it. Ages 4–8.

A Promise Is a Promise by Robert Munsch and Michael Kusugak (Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 1988). An Inuit child learns the meaning of the words "A promise is a promise" after she encounters imaginary Arctic creatures under the ice. Ages 4–8.

Titanic Crossing by Barbara Williams (New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1995). When the *Titanic* hits an iceberg, Albert knows that his first responsibility is to his little sister. He risks his own life to save hers. Ages 8–12.

"For those who are willing to make an effort,
great miracles and wonderful treasures are in store."

—Isaac Bashevis Singer

My Daily Plan

Month ______________________ Year ______________________

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

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Carlisle students (from left) Susan Simpson, Clayton Piner, and Wesley Collins

Kids Who Work for Safety

Students at Carlisle School
Covington, Kentucky

Third and fourth graders at Carlisle School in Covington, Kentucky, banged their fists on their desks. They were angry. Three little kids had been hit by cars in front of their school and rushed to hospitals. The brother of one of the kids had been hit by a car that jumped the curb and dragged him into the street.

"This is totally insane," Clayton complained. "Now it seems like the cars are coming after us."

"This happens all the time," Brandy added.

Ms. Joan Behnke, their teacher, had trained her students to solve problems in their neighborhood, so the kids were quick to notice problems that needed attention. She listened and said, "What do you want to do about it? You're the Community Problem Solving Team. You should think of some solutions."

"Let's call the police," Susan suggested, "and find out how many kids have been hit."

That's what Susan did. She called the police. They said that 235 kids had been hit coming or going from Covington schools in the last four years. And that was just the number of kids who'd gone to hospitals.

Rodney said, "That doesn't count the kids who got hit but didn't have to go to the hospital."

"If you don't learn to be safe," said Brittany, "no one will do it for you."

The kids put their heads together. They decided it was up to them to teach young kids how to be street-smart. So they created a skit to teach children how to play it safe. They wore mouse costumes and used music to make the skit interesting and fun.

But that wasn't enough for the Community Problem Solving Team. They made a video of their skit to loan out to others, and they held a poster contest. They also invited someone from Project Safe Place to speak to their school. Through Project Safe Place, the team learned how to set up programs to give kids safe places to go for help, and what to do in order to be safe.

With all this flurry of work, the kids won an award in the International Community Problem Solving contest. But there was an even better reward.

"After that," smiled Wesley, holding up his thumb, "not *one* child at Carlisle School was hit by a car all year!"

FIND OUT MORE . . .

To learn how to start a problem solving program in your school or community, contact this organization:

Future Problem Solving Program
Community Problem Solving
2500 Packard Road, Suite 110
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-6827
Toll-free phone: 1-800-256-1499
Web site: *www.fpsp.org*

Safety—What Does It Mean?

"The world's children deserve to walk the earth in safety."

—Bill Clinton, 42nd U.S. president

One day ten-year-old Teng was swimming at the city pool with some friends. It was a hot afternoon, and the pool was crowded. Teng watched as a little boy ran, laughing, near the edge of the pool. Suddenly the boy slipped and tumbled into the water. "Help!" the boy shrieked as his head went under. His arms and legs splashed every which way.

Teng thought and acted quickly. First, he grabbed a safety ring from the side of the pool and threw it to the boy. At the same time, Teng yelled to a man sitting nearby, "That boy fell in! He needs help!" Then Teng hurried to get the lifeguard. By the time the lifeguard dove in and swam toward the boy, the man had pulled the child out of the pool to safety. Thanks to Teng's quick, safe actions, the little boy didn't drown.

When you think about being **safe,** what comes to mind? Swimming with a buddy and where there's a lifeguard? Crossing streets carefully? Using a helmet when you ride a bike and a seat belt when you're in a car?

The National Safety Council says that in 1997 more than 1,000 children ages fourteen and under drowned. In 1996 more than 35,700 people were hurt on skateboards and treated in the hospital. In the same year, over 566,000 people were rushed to the hospital with bicycle injuries. That's a lot of hurt people. This gives you a good idea why knowing about **safety** can help to protect you.

Safety means being free from harm or risk. To be safe, you need to be careful. At home, some ways to be safe are keeping the door locked, staying away from the stove or fireplace, and not playing with matches. Safety at school includes walking in the halls instead of running, and using safety equipment for science and gym. Out on your own, you keep safe by staying close to your home or neighborhood and not talking to strangers.

Part of being safe is *feeling* safe inside. "But," you might say, "lots of bad things happen. I can't stop all of them. So how can I feel safe inside?"

It's true that you can't stop all bad things from happening. But you can learn and follow safety guidelines. You can learn what you need to be careful about. Knowing what to do and being careful can help you be safe *and* feel safer inside.

How Can You Be Safe?

There are three important things you can do to help yourself be safe:

- Know the safety rules and guidelines to follow at school, at home, in activities, and on your own.
- Know what to do in an emergency.
- Make good choices when you're in an unsafe or tricky situation.

Know Safety Rules

Do you know the safety guidelines about letting people into your house or apartment building? About using the toaster, stove, microwave, washer, or dryer in your home? Do you know the safety rules for the bus you ride to school? The pool where you swim? The playground where you shoot baskets? The ice rink where you figure skate or play hockey?

Most places and activities have rules you can follow to be safe. If you're not sure what they are, ask an adult who's in charge to point out the rules and explain them.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

The National Safety Council has all kinds of statistics. If you visit the Web site, you can get a copy of "The Safe-T Rangers on Vacation," a fun story about seat-belt safety with activity pages:

National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
Toll-free phone: 1-800-621-7615
Web site: *www.nsc.org/*
Web site link for "Safe-T Rangers": *www.nsc.org/traf/sbc/safet.htm*

Write or call the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute for ideas on buying helmets, statistics, and more (remember to ask permission before making a long-distance phone call):

Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute
4611 Seventh Street South
Arlington, VA 22204-1419
Phone number: (703) 486-0100
Web site: *www.helmets.org*

Know What to Do in an Emergency

An **emergency** is a dangerous situation that needs to be helped right away. In an emergency, quick thinking can keep you and everyone else safe. For any emergency, it's important to stay calm, think, and act quickly.

Talk to your dad, mom, or guardian about emergencies that might happen at home and what you should do if one *does* happen. What if a pan catches fire on the stove? If your little sister swallows a toy? If your older brother falls and hits his head? Talk with your teacher, coach, or club leader, too. Ask what you should do when emergencies happen during school or other activities.

6 STEPS TO TAKE IN AN EMERGENCY

1. Stay calm.
2. Find a grown-up who can help right away.
3. If you can't find a trusted adult, call "9-1-1" or dial "0" for the operator.
4. Tell the problem to the person on the phone. Tell it as clearly and briefly as you can.
5. Tell the person your full name and the address or place you're calling from.
6. Stay on the phone to answer and ask questions and to get more instructions.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here are some resources about dealing with emergencies:

KidsHealth.org for Kids is a Web site you can visit to learn about emergency first aid and safety around the house and outdoors. Go to: *www.kidshealth.org/kid/watch*.

Kids to the Rescue: First Aid Techniques for Kids by Maribeth and Darwin Boelts (Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, 1992). This book shows how to help out in fourteen different medical emergencies. Ages 7–12.

Now I Know Better: Kids Tell Kids About Safety by the Pediatric Emergency Department, Children's Hospital at Yale-New Haven (Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press, 1996). Kids' own essays about accidents and emergencies they've experienced and what they've learned. Ages 9–12.

Make Safe Choices

To make good choices, it's important to keep yourself healthy. You might wonder, "What does being healthy have to do with making safe choices?" When you eat food that's good for you and get plenty of sleep and exercise, you feel your best. Both your body and your mind are stronger. A strong body helps keep you safe from illness. A strong mind helps you think more clearly and make better choices.

What kinds of choices? There are lots of times when you can choose to do the safe thing. At school, it's a safe choice to decide not to be a bully, or not to hit back when someone *else* is a bully. On the way to and from school, it's a safe choice to walk in a group, cross at crosswalks, and stay away from strangers or gangs. If you see someone stealing something or hurting someone, it's a safe choice to tell an adult about it as soon as you can. Alone or with friends, it's a safe choice never to fool around with alcohol or other drugs. At home, it's a safe choice never to touch matches unless you're with an adult. In your home or someone else's, it's a safe choice *never* to play with—or even touch—a gun.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here are four books about making good choices:

Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain by Trevor Romain (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1997). A funny and helpful book to help you become "Bully-Proof." Ages 8–12.

Guns: What You Should Know by Rachel Schulson (Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co., 1997). With all the shooting in movies and on TV, it can be hard to remember that guns can really hurt people. This book gives good information about guns and gun safety. Ages 4–8.

The Safe Zone: A Kid's Guide to Personal Safety by Donna Chaiet and Francine Russell (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1998). Teaches ideas for nonviolent self-defense. Includes lots of realistic "what if" situations. Ages 9–12.

What Would You Do? A Kid's Guide to Tricky and Sticky Situations by Linda Schwartz (Santa Barbara, CA: The Learning Works, 1990). A book that tells kids how to handle more than seventy situations from being locked out, lost, or followed to dealing with bullies, guns, drugs, and drunk adults. Ages 8–12.

Another important choice has to do with shows, movies, and games you see and play on TV and the computer. Watching **violence** and playing **violent** games won't help you feel safe and careful. Instead, it can make *you* feel violent, too. Violence is about hurting people. Hurting somebody isn't a safe thing to do. There are many other games and shows to play and watch. You can probably think of lots of safe, fun ways to play *without* violence.

> **" . . . the most important lesson for every time of life, is this: 'Never hurt anybody.'"**
>
> ***—Denis Breeze***

Do you have a little voice inside you that sometimes tells you something doesn't feel safe? That little voice is called **instinct,** or a "gut feeling." Sometimes you just feel that things aren't right. Even if you can't say for sure what's wrong, it's usually a good choice to trust your instinct. Maybe you don't feel comfortable at a friend's home. Maybe you think a stranger is looking at you funny. You might wonder if you're just imagining things. But if something doesn't feel right to you, the best choice is to find a way to feel safe.

How? If you want to go home, call a parent or another adult you trust to come get you. If you're worried about a stranger, run home or run to a group of people. Or run to a safe house in your neighborhood.

In many communities there are safe places especially for kids who are bullied, followed, or hurt while walking in a neighborhood. One such place is a McGruff house. A McGruff house will have a picture of McGruff the Crime Dog with the words "McGruff house" in the window or on the door. Find out if there's a safe house or block-parent program in your neighborhood. Learn where it is. If

your neighborhood doesn't have one, tell your parents. Ask if they can work with your neighbors or police department to start one.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Here's a group you can contact to find out how to start a McGruff program in your community. (Don't forget to ask permission before calling long distance.)

National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)
1700 K Street, NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
Phone number: (202) 466-6272
Web site: *www.ncpc.org/*

6 GUIDELINES FOR FEELING AND BEING SAFE

Stick to safety rules at school, on the bus, on the street, at home, and in sports and other activities. Stay away from dangerous things like drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, matches, fireworks, knives, and guns. Never touch any of these things if an adult isn't there.

Ask a trusted adult to help you if you see something dangerous or if you don't feel safe.

Feel safe inside by following safety rules, being careful, knowing what to do in an emergency, and making safe choices.

Encourage your friends to be safe, too. Stick to what you know is right even if friends tease you or try to change your mind.

Trust your instinct. Listen to the voice inside you that says something isn't right.

Yell for help if you're in danger.

IMPORTANT!

Maybe you don't feel safe at home or at school. Maybe a child or an adult you know is hurting you. Maybe you're afraid of bullies, or gangs, or guns in your neighborhood. Think about an adult you trust who can help you. This might be a parent, relative, neighbor, sitter, teacher, coach, group leader, or someone at your place of worship. Tell the person why you don't feel safe and ask for his or her help.

What If?

Here are some situations for you to think about, write about, talk about, or act out.

1. You have a friend who likes to play violent video games. He makes fun of you when you say you don't want to play. Other kids like your friend and listen to what your friend says. One day you're at your friend's home with a bunch of other kids. Everyone's taking turns with a violent game and teasing you to join in. The kids start shoving and punching. What can you do to keep yourself safe and to encourage your friends to be safe, too?

2. Your older sister takes you to her secret hideout. She makes you promise never to tell anyone about it. Her hideout is a beautiful group of trees with a pond in the middle. Your sister says, "Come on in. The water's nice and warm in this pond." You know that swimming without adults is dangerous and that it's against your family's safety rules. But you want very much to have fun with your sister, and she is a good swimmer. How can you help both of you stay safe and still have her trust you?

3. You've been to a birthday party. Your friend's mother offers to drive all of you home. To save time, she starts loading all ten kids into one minivan. There aren't enough seat belts for each kid. You want to be respectful and polite to the mother, but you know what she's doing isn't safe. Is it possible to be polite and still stay safe? Why or why not? What can you do to be safe yourself? To help the other kids be safe?

More Ways to Be Safe

Here are some activities you can do to find more ways to help yourself and others be safe.

Make an Emergency Phone Number List

Here's what you'll need:

- Copies of "Emergency Phone Numbers" on page 150
- Phone book

Copy the "Emergency Phone Numbers" page and fill it in with your family. When you're done, display the list where you can see it easily while using the phone. This is a good activity for a family meeting (see "Have Family Meetings" on pages 37–38).

Do a Home Safety Check

Here's what you'll need:

- Copy of "Home Safety Checklist" on page 151

This is another good activity for a family meeting. With your family, check your house or apartment to see that it's as safe as possible. Make a copy of the "Home Safety Checklist." Walk through your home and check each item on the list. When you're done, figure out how the family can fix anything you found that wasn't safe.

Make a Safety Flyer

Here's what you'll need:

- Paper
- Pens, colored pencils, or fine-point markers

Make a safety flyer and pass it out in your school or neighborhood. You can use one of these ideas, or come up with one of your own:

- water safety
- walking safety
- bike safety
- fire safety
- bus safety

Water Safety Tips

* Learn how to swim.
* Never swim alone.
* Never swim in polluted water.
* Walk (don't run) around swimming pools.
* Make sure there's a lifeguard.
* Always wear a life jacket when boating or waterskiing.
* Don't play in fast-running streams or rivers.
* Don't play near water during a thunderstorm.
* Never walk or skate on frozen lakes, ponds, or streams unless you're at an open public rink or with an adult.

Plan to Be Safe During a Disaster

Here's what you'll need:

- Copy of "Let's Be Ready!" on page 152

A **disaster** is something dangerous that happens suddenly and affects people in a big way. Earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and fires are examples of disasters. With

REMINDER: Don't forget to keep track of your progress on the "Building My Character Muscles" chart (page 16).

your family, class, or after-school group, talk about the types of disasters that could happen in your area. Make a copy of "Let's Be Ready!" and look together for the answers to the questions. Where can you go to get the information you need? You might:

- call a newspaper or TV station (or visit their Web site) to learn what to do in a weather emergency.
- find out where to call by checking the phone book under "Public Safety."
- call the local police or fire department (call the regular number, not "9-1-1" or another emergency number).

When you've finished filling out "Let's Be Ready!" display the sheet where everyone can see it easily, like on the refrigerator or bulletin board.

FIND OUT MORE . . .

Check out some of these books on dealing with disasters:

I'll Know What to Do: A Kid's Guide to Natural Disasters **by Bonnie S. Mark and Aviva Layton (Washington, DC: Magination, 1997). Gives important tips on safety as well as ideas for understanding and handling fear and other feelings that come with disasters. Ages 8–13.**

Fire Night! **by Monica Driscoll Beatty (Santa Fe, NM: Health Press, 1999). Twelve-year-old Katy tells what she's learned about fire safety to overcome her fears and make the right decisions during a fire. Ages 4–8.**

Tornado Alert **by Giuilio Maestro and Franklyn Mansfield Branley (New York: HarperTrophy, 1990). Learn where, when, and how a tornado develops along with ways to keep safe when a tornado is near. Ages 4–8.**

We Shake in a Quake **by Hannah Gelman Givon (Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press, 1996). Tips on what to do before, during, and after an earthquake. Ages 4–8.**

Read Stories About Safety

The Boxcar Children by Gertrude Warner (Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books, 1992). Four orphans who have run away from the grandfather they have never met make their home in an old railroad boxcar. Ages 8–10.

Dana Doesn't Like Guns Anymore by Carole Webb Moore-Slater (New York: Friendship Press, 1992). Dana learns that guns are dangerous when he plays with a friend's BB gun. Ages 7–10.

Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann (New York: Putnam Publishing, 1995). Officer Buckle puts everyone to sleep with his dull lectures on safety, but his police dog, Gloria, knows how to liven things up. Ages 4–8.

Pedal Power by Judy Delton (New York: Yearling Books, 1998). A group of kids are planning a bike hike, but Roger thinks the safety rules are dumb. Ages 6–9.

Stolen Ponies by Jeanne Betancourt (New York: Little Apple, 1999). The "Pony Pals" discover that Tommy and Mike have been lighting campfires in the woods. Ages 9–12.

Emergency Phone Numbers

Who or what	Phone number
Local emergency number	
Fire department	
Police	
Poison control	
Disaster hotline	
Abuse hotline	
Doctor	
Ambulance	
Mom's/Dad's/ Guardian's work number	
Other relative or friend:	
Neighbor:	
Weather alert	
Power company	
Veterinarian	
Other numbers:	

Our phone number(s):	Our address:

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Home Safety Checklist

Please check for dangers in your home. Make changes for each item checked "No."

Yes	No	
____	____	There are smoke detectors in bedrooms, kitchen, furnace room.
____	____	There are fire extinguishers on each floor and by the cooktop.
____	____	There are carbon monoxide detectors on each floor.
____	____	There are no electrical cords under rugs.
____	____	Wall plugs are not overloaded with many cords plugged in.
____	____	Paints, thinners, turpentine, and other flammable things are in closed, airtight containers.
____	____	Matches and lighters are safely stored out of reach of small children.
____	____	There are *no* oily, greasy rags lying around. These are placed in cans or jars with lids.
____	____	Pesticides and herbicides are in child- and animal-proof containers.
____	____	Cleaning fluids are out of reach of small children.
____	____	Guns are unloaded and are locked. Only adults have keys to gun storage cabinet.
____	____	Ammunition is stored separately. Only adults have access to key.
____	____	Fireworks are safely stored under lock and key. Only adults have access to key.
____	____	Furnaces and water heaters are checked each year.
____	____	Furnaces and water heaters are strapped down so that they cannot move around.
____	____	Medicines are out of reach of small children.
____	____	Medicines are stored in childproof containers.
____	____	Rugs are fastened down tightly.
____	____	All outside doors have deadbolts.
____	____	Windows can be locked shut.

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Let's Be Ready!

Disaster we want to be ready for: ______________________________

(*examples:* tornado, flood, earthquake)

How will we know it is happening or will happen?
(*examples:* siren will sound, message will come on TV or radio)

Where should we go to be safe? What should we do there?
(*examples:* meet in cellar, gather on sidewalk in front of building)

What food or supplies should we have on hand?
(*examples:* water, cereal, radio, flashlight)

How will we know the disaster is over?
(*examples:* radio will say, "all clear" signal will sound)

What should we do to be safe after the disaster?
(*examples:* stay away from downed power lines, wait for parent before returning home)

DO's and DON'Ts during this disaster:
(*examples:* DO go to the hallway, DON'T stand near windows)

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Glossary

adobe: made of clay or sun-dried earth

ancestors: relatives who lived before and are now gone, such as great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents

bilingual: using two different languages, like English and Vietnamese

caring: showing that you care about someone; showing concern, being kind, sharing, helping, and giving are all ways that you show you care

chairperson: a person in charge of a meeting

character: having positive qualities such as caring, fairness, honesty, respect, and responsibility

character trait: a certain positive quality that shows strong character

citizen: a person who lives in a community, state, province, or country; in a democracy, citizens have both freedoms (rights) and responsibilities

citizenship: being a member of a community, state, province, or country; the way you act as a member of a community

collage: a poster with lots of different pictures and words on it

conflict: a disagreement about a problem

consequence: what might happen as a result of something you do or say

cooperate: to work and play together peacefully; to work together on a job or on a problem that needs to be solved

cooperation: working or playing together peacefully

Creator: God; a Higher Power

democracy: a form of government where people choose their leaders by voting

depend: to count on

dependable: able to be counted on

disaster: something dangerous that happens suddenly and affects people in a big way

disrespectful: not showing respect

donate: to give something to an organization

elders: adults; people who are older than you

emergency:	a dangerous situation that needs to be helped right away
environment:	the indoor and outdoor world around you, including the places you live, play, and go to school, the air you breathe, the water you swim in and drink, and the soil that grows food
fable:	a story that has been told for a long time; a fable usually teaches a lesson
fair:	similar for everyone; when you're fair, you do your best to share, take turns, and treat each person with respect
fairness:	treating other people the way you would like to be treated; giving everyone the kinds of rights and chances you have
family:	the person or people you live with; people in families love and take care of each other
forgive:	to give up hurt or angry feelings toward someone
forgiveness:	the act of forgiving someone; giving up hurt or anger toward someone
foster children:	children who don't live with the parents they're born or adopted to; they live with other families temporarily until they can return home or until another family is found for them
foster parents:	adults who take children into their families temporarily until the children can return home or until another family is found for them
friend:	someone you care about and like to do things with
genuine:	real; when you're genuine, you don't pretend to be what you're not—you let people know the real *you*
graffiti:	letters, names, words, or pictures drawn on walls or doors
honest:	truthful; able to be trusted; when you're honest, you tell the truth and let people know the real you
honesty:	truthfulness
instinct:	the voice inside you that tells you when something does or doesn't feel right or safe; a "gut feeling"

jealous: feeling bad because someone has something you want; wishing you could have what someone else has or be like someone else

lobby: to show or tell your lawmakers how you want them to vote

log: a kind of list, diary, or journal that keeps track of when something happened

mosque: a Muslim place of worship

patriotic: feeling and showing love for your country

peso: a type of money used in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries

property: something owned by a person or group of people

recorder: a person who writes down the important things talked about during a meeting

relationship: the connection or tie you have to another person, such as a friend or family member

respect: care and concern for others and yourself; when you respect someone, you care about the person's ideas, thoughts, and feelings

responsibility: the act of making good choices, being dependable, and taking charge of your own actions, words, and thoughts

responsible: dependable; able to be counted on

role-play: to act out

safe: free from harm or risk

safety: being free from harm or risk

service: a kind act that you do for people, animals, or the environment

stress: worry that won't go away and that makes you feel bad

stroke: a sudden loss of blood to the brain

trustworthy: able to be counted on to do what you say you'll do; dependable

vicious: dangerously violent

violence: doing things that hurt people

violent: harmful; hurtful

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About the Author

Barbara A. Lewis is a national award-winning author and educator who teaches kids how to think and solve real problems. Her students at Jackson Elementary in Salt Lake City, Utah, worked to clean up dangerous waste, improve sidewalks, plant thousands of trees, and fight crime. They lobbied and pushed through several laws in the Utah legislature and an amendment to a national law. The kids have earned many national awards, including two President's Environmental Youth Awards, the Arbor Day Award, the Renew America Award, and the A Pledge and a Promise Environmental Award.

Stories about Barbara and her work have appeared in many national newspapers, magazines, and news programs, including *Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, Family Circle,* "CBS This Morning," "CBS World News," and CNN. She has also written many articles and short stories for national magazines. Barbara's other books for Free Spirit Publishing include *A Leader's Guide to Being Your Best, What Do You Stand For?, The Kid's Guide to Social Action, Kids with Courage,* and *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects.* Her books have won Parenting's Reading-Magic Award and have been named "Best of the Best for Children" by the American Library Association, among other honors.

Barbara has lived in Indiana, New Jersey, Switzerland, and Belgium. She is currently the Coordinator for PATHS (Program for Academically Talented and High-Achieving Students) in the Park City School District. She and her husband Larry live in Park City, Utah. They have five great children: Mike and his wife Michelle (the M & M's), Little Roo (the horse expert), Christian (the Pooker), and Samuel (the Lamanite). They also have three *grand*children: Jordi, Skyler, and Baby Drew. The family also includes a pet squirrel who rules the deck in their backyard, several "deer" friends, a few bossy raccoons, and a forest of jays, magpies, finches, hummingbirds, and other feathered friends.

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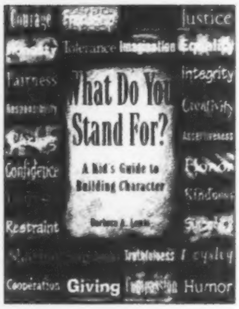
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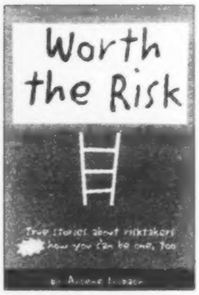
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- **Activities** you can do to build your character traits
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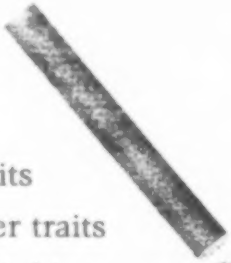
- **Resources** including books, organizations, and Web sites for learning more about the character traits



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Barbara A. Lewis is a national award-winning author and educator who teaches kids how to think and solve real problems. She lives and works in Park City, Utah.

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A LEADER'S GUIDE TO

BEING YOUR BEST

Character Building for Kids 7–10

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Introduction

Being Your Best: Character Building for Kids 7–10 is, in a sense, a younger sibling to a character-building book entitled *What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character,* which I developed for children ages 11 and up. The purpose of the original book was to teach kids about important character traits that could help them grow to be caring, giving, responsible, and purposeful citizens in today's fast-paced and often-violent world. I knew that children 11 and older could understand abstract concepts like honesty, forgiveness, and responsibility and begin to develop positive character traits if given the proper tools. The book became successful, yet something was missing. Many teachers and caregivers who read it realized that the core concepts presented weren't beyond the grasp of younger children—and, in fact, that it's beneficial to teach character education as early as possible in children's lives. In response to this need, *Being Your Best,* a character-building program for kids ages 7–10 was born.

Character Development and Children

Character development has been an essential part of my work with children for the past 14 years. I've discovered that, while good character isn't a gift dropped into our souls at the time of birth, we can—at any age—work to develop our own character. I believe that *every* child (older or younger) can grow stronger "character muscles."

Jean Piaget was among the first psychologists to explore moral development in children. He suggested that children are characterized by egocentrism and need opportunities for cooperation and problem solving in order to grow in moral development.

Lawrence Kohlberg identified six stages of moral development, indicating that a child must move consecutively from one stage to the next. Elliot Turiel expanded the concept of morality and actions that result from social convention. Carol Gilligan suggested that females and males perceive morality differently.*

I believe that character-development activities can help a child to gain a moral conscience at a faster and more sophisticated rate than Kohlberg indicated was possible. My work with children in the classroom has proven to me that children don't necessarily have to progress from one stage to the next as he suggested. I have seen children make great leaps of understanding and concern to stages beyond their expected development by being involved in significant character-developing projects and problem solving.

Being Your Best and this leader's guide support children's development of cooperation and decision-making skills emphasized by Piaget. The depth and breadth of the activities provide for differences in gender (Gilligan), learning styles, interests, and personality types as well as for those differences that custom or conventional rules might dictate (Turiel).

Children *can* develop good character traits, and they, their families, and society will benefit from their doing so. It's never too early to begin teaching children positive character traits! *Being*

---

*See J. Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (New York: The Free Press, 1965); F. C. Power, A. Higgins, and L. Kohlberg, *Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); L. Nucci and E. Weber, "The Domain Approach to Values Education Applications" (1991) in *Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development,* W. Kurtines and J. Gewirtz, eds., Volume 3: Applications, pp. 251–266; and C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

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Your Best and *A Leader's Guide to Being Your Best* are tools that teachers, youth group leaders, and parents can use to help younger children do so. And, as adults who work with children, we have a responsibility to lead them on the path to good character.

This task may seem daunting, especially in a time when we hear more and more about violence in homes and in schools, and when television and the Internet may expose children to images of sex or violence at an early age. Now more than ever, we teachers, parents, youth group leaders, and other caregivers need to provide children with the positive experiences that will help counter the negative ones. This means doing more than posting a chart listing good character traits on the wall. What will have a greater impact is hanging up a chart *and* talking continuously about the meaning of good character—as well as providing lots of positive character-building experiences in the classroom, home, and community. Character education is a gradual process that requires discussion, practice, and hands-on experience. The effect is cumulative—achieved one step at a time.

About the Character Traits

The character traits in *Being Your Best*—caring, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, forgiveness, honesty, relationships, respect, responsibility, and safety—are basic values identified by many schools and communities worldwide. Certain core character traits are necessary for a child to develop into a healthy, functioning, positive member of society—traits such as being truthful, caring for others, forming strong personal relationships, acting responsibly, and so on. The traits presented in *Being Your Best* are an outgrowth of the core qualities. These character traits help kids learn to understand and work together with others—especially those who are different from themselves—as well as to develop a concern for the quality of life in their families, among their friends, and within their communities. These traits help children learn to take responsibility for themselves and their own actions—a key part of becoming stronger, more fully developed people. Children also come to see that they have responsibilities beyond themselves, as members of a larger community. As children grow both inward and outward, they gain higher self-esteem and confidence, and have a greater belief in their own power to make a positive impact on the world.

The Utah State Office of Education (in my home state) emphasizes that an effective character-education program recognizes both *academic growth* and *character development* as the twin goals of education. It makes sense that schools, scout troops, community groups for children, faith communities, and families are the places to begin teaching children basic, universal values—values that are most likely consistent with the existing missions of any such group. Whether you're a parent, teacher, troop leader, youth group leader, or caregiver, you can use *Being Your Best* and the leader's guide to work toward the important goal of helping kids build values and better character.

The leader's guide accompanies and expands on the material presented in the children's book. You can use the guide when leading lessons with a group of only a few children or an entire classroom. (Though the lessons are structured for group use, many can also be used within a family.) The book provides ideas for facilitating discussions, offers step-by-step guidance in planning and leading activities, and suggests other resources that can offer further information on character traits. When preparing to lead your group, be sure to read the accompanying material thoroughly before teaching each character trait. Also take time before meeting with your group to photocopy the necessary reproducible handouts, prepare any other materials, and familiarize yourself with the activities you'll be covering. And before you begin teaching any *Being Your Best* lessons, you may want to notify parents or guardians about the character-building activities that children will be doing. If you wish, reproduce the letter on page 5 to introduce the program to parents.

About the Chapters and Lessons

The children's book is divided into an introduction and eleven chapters. These chapters correspond to the eleven lessons in this leader's guide.

Chapter/Lesson 1

The first chapter, "Getting to Know You," introduces the concept of character building and helps children evaluate their current "character muscles." It encourages children to look inwardly at themselves, so they can develop their own character self-portrait and see where to begin. If children wish to keep this information private, respect that desire. Kids will develop most when they think it's safe to be honest and when they're allowed to be "in charge" of themselves.

In the "Getting to Know You" lesson in the leader's guide, you'll find a "Building My Character Muscles" handout (page 13) that children can use to chart their progress. This reproducible page may be used with each lesson. Children can work on more than one trait at a time, if they wish. However, when working with a group, you'll probably want to choose one trait that all children will work on together, and then move on to another one together. You don't have to work on the character traits in the order they appear in the book and leader's guide. Once you've finished the first lesson, "Getting to Know You," you can teach the ten character traits in any sequence and time frame that suits you and your group.

Chapters/Lessons 2–11

Lessons 2–11 correspond to the ten character traits addressed in the children's book.

Here's an example of the sequence of that book's chapter elements, from "Caring" on pages 17–27:

- "Someone Who Cares" presents a true story of a child who showed strong character.
- "Caring—What Does It Mean?" defines and explains the character trait.
- "How Can You Show That You Care?" gives examples of how children can use and practice the trait in their own lives.
- "What If?" character dilemmas invite children to figure out possible solutions to sticky situations.
- "More Ways to Show Caring" suggests activities children can do with families, at school, or in other groups. The activities range from simple to more complex to fit children's different ages and ability levels.
- "Read Stories About Caring" describes children's books featuring fictional kids of strong character.
- "Find Out More" describes other books and organizations related to the trait.

The format of the lessons in the leader's guide closely follows the elements of the chapters in the children's book:

- "Reading Review" corresponds with the first three elements in each chapter. You'll find questions that of the character trait.

- "Character Dilemmas" provides ideas for discussing and role-playing "What If?" scenarios and also features additional dilemmas.
- "Activities in the Children's Book" gives detailed instructions on how to implement that book's activities in your class or group.
- "Additional Group Activities" presents several more activities not found in the children's book.
- "Resources" includes books and organizations that may be of interest to you.
- "Looking Ahead" lets you check children's progress and plan for the next lesson.

In addition, several reproducible pages required for the lessons are gathered at the end of each leader's guide lesson.

The leader's guide includes clear and complete instructions for each lesson. Text that is in **boldface** offers suggested language for classroom teachers or adult group leaders. The goal was to create a guide that would be welcoming and easy to use for any leader, beginning or experienced.

Child Protection Laws

Confidentiality is important to the success of the lessons, but there are certain things you may hear or observe that you must report for the protection of the child and any others involved. Before beginning the lessons, be absolutely clear that you know what you're legally required to report and what the guidelines for reporting are. These reporting requirements usually fall under the category of child protection legislation. Most school districts and youth organizations have developed guidelines to conform to child protection laws. Learn what those guidelines are and who you should report to if the need arises. You can also obtain information about what to do and how to report child abuse from your local police department or district attorney's office.

If a child reports abuse to you at any point during the lessons, don't attempt to further interview the child. Let the child speak about what is happening, and affirm the child and how difficult it must be to be in that situation. After the lesson, and with regard to the laws of your state or organization, report the abuse promptly.

Don't ask the child leading questions about abuse. Leave that to professionals who have been specially trained to deal with this sensitive issue.

Don't frighten the child by talking about reporting the abuse. In many cases, children who are being abused have been told by their abusers that very bad things will happen to them if they tell anyone. Report the situation immediately to the appropriate authorities and let them handle it.

For information on child abuse, contact:

The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20447
1-800-394-3366
www.calib.com/nccanch

The National Exchange Club Foundation for the Prevention of Child Abuse
3050 Central Avenue
Toledo, OH 43606
1-800-924-2643
www.preventchildabuse.com

Prevent Child Abuse America
200 South Michigan Avenue, 17th floor
Chicago, IL 60604-2404
1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)
www.preventchildabuse.org

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

I'm writing to let you know about an exciting new program the children and I will be starting soon. It's called "Being Your Best," and it's designed to help kids develop positive character traits.

In this eleven-lesson program, children will learn why developing strong character traits is important. Then they will work on developing ten specific character traits: caring, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, forgiveness, honesty, relationships, respect, responsibility, and safety. Through readings, activities, discussions, and role play, children will learn how to work better with others, become more responsible for themselves, take responsibility and solve problems in their school or neighborhood, and form more positive relationships with their peers, their family members, and others in their communities.

I encourage you to read the book your child will be reading during the course. It's called *Being Your Best: Character Building for Kids 7–10.* Ask your child if you can read his or her book, or contact me for a loaner copy. You may want to become familiar with the material and the particular character trait your child is working on in a given week. You might wish to talk to your child about it or find ways to help your child practice that character trait at home. Be aware that many of the suggested activities in this program involve participation by parents or family members (such as holding family meetings, assisting with service projects, taking family surveys, and so on). I encourage you to participate as much as you are able.

"Being Your Best" can be a wonderful growing experience for your child. You might notice that your daughter or son is behaving and relating to others in your family differently. Please be patient and encouraging; it takes time and practice to develop new character traits.

We'll begin "Being Your Best" on ________________. Please feel free to call me with any questions you have.

Sincerely yours,

____

Telephone: ________________________________

Best times to reach me: ________________________

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Lesson 1

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

In this lesson, children learn the meaning of character and complete a series of quizzes designed to help them recognize several different character traits—with the goal of discovering which aspects of their own character they need or want to develop.

Concepts

Self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-actualization

Being Your Best Chapters

- "What's Character, and Why Do People Need It?" (pages 1–4)
- "Caring" (pages 17–27)
- "Getting to Know You" (pages 5–16)

Reading Review

What's Character, and Why Do People Need It?

Talk with children about this introductory chapter to *Being Your Best*. Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 1–2. To be certain children understand what they've read, ask questions like:

- **Are you like a book? How?**
- **What are some ways you can tell about what a person thinks and feels?**
- **What's character?**
- **What's a character trait? Who can give me an example of a character trait?**

Look over the book and point out the table of contents, index, and glossary. Make sure children understand how to use each of these reference pages. Explain that each of the character trait chapters has the same parts. Illustrate this by turning to the chapter called "Caring" and pointing out the main chapter elements:

- "Someone Who Cares"
- "Caring—What Does It Mean?"
- "How Can You Show That You Care?"
- "6 Ways to Grow in Caring"
- "What If?"
- "More Ways to Show Caring"
- quotations, "Find Out More," and "Important!" notes

You might say: **Here's a chapter about caring. Every chapter is about a different character trait, but all of the chapters will have these same kinds of parts.**

Getting to Know You

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on *Being Your Best* pages 5–6. Ask children:

- **When you think about the *inside* you, what are two important things to remember?**
- **How are character traits like muscles? What does it mean to build character muscles?**

You might also wish to say: **Remember that everyone has to build their own muscles themselves, and so do you. No one else can do it for you.**

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Activities

Quizzes

Materials Needed

- *Optional:* Copies of "My Character Muscles," "My Family and Friends," "What's My Personal Style?" and "A Snapshot of Me" handouts (leader's guide pages 8, 9, 10, and 11–12)
- Pens or pencils

If children haven't completed the quizzes yet, have them do so at this time. The purpose of the quizzes is to help children begin to understand their own character strengths and weaknesses. Explanations of what the answers might mean begin on page 12 of *Being Your Best*. You might ask for volunteers to explain their answers and what they feel they mean. (If some children don't want to discuss their quizzes in front of others, that's fine.) For each quiz, you might ask: **Does anyone have a question about this quiz or what it means?**

NOTE: The children's book invites kids to use what they learn about themselves to help them decide which trait to work on first. With a group, however, you might find it works best to have everyone focus on the same trait during your lesson time. You might have children vote to choose the first trait to work on and allow them to work on other traits independently.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

My Character Muscles

Read each pair of sentences. Check the ONE from each pair that describes you. Or check BOTH if you believe that you already have that trait but would like to make it stronger. **To learn what your answers mean, see page 12 in *Being Your Best.***

1. _____ I'm kind and I care about helping others. _____ I'd like to be more kind and caring.

2. _____ I'm a good citizen. I like to help in my school, family, and community. _____ I want to be a better citizen. I want to help more in my school, family, and community.

3. _____ I take turns and cooperate with others. _____ Sometimes I don't like to take turns or cooperate with others.

4. _____ I'm fair with others, and I'm willing to share. _____ I usually only treat people fairly if I like them. I don't like to share.

5. _____ I forgive people easily. _____ It's hard for me to forgive people. Sometimes I hold a grudge.

6. _____ I tell the truth most of the time. _____ I often tell lies.

7. _____ I get along with my family and friends. _____ I argue and fight sometimes.

8. _____ I'm polite and I show respect for everyone. _____ Sometimes I interrupt, act rude, call people names, or make fun of people.

9. _____ I'm responsible. I do my chores and homework. _____ I don't always do my chores and homework.

10. _____ I play safely and try to keep myself and others safe. _____ I don't always play safely. Sometimes I take dangerous risks.

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My Family and Friends

For each sentence, check the box that best describes how you feel about your relationships. **To learn what your answers mean, see page 13 in *Being Your Best*.**

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never or hardly ever
1. My friends like me.			
2. I like my friends.			
3. My parent(s) or guardian(s) listen to me when I talk.			
4. I listen to my parent(s) or guardian(s) when they talk to me.			
5. My friends have fun with me.			
6. I like my teacher(s).			
7. My teacher(s) like me.			
8. I like my brother(s) and sister(s). They don't bug me very much.			
9. My family and I share chores and work together.			
10. I think all people are important.			
11. My friends admire me and can count on me.			
12. It's easy for me to talk to younger kids.			
13. Younger kids like me.			
14. I like to talk with older people.			
15. Older people like me.			

Count the number of checks in each column and write the numbers below.

Number of **"Most of the time"** responses: _____

Number of **"Some of the time"** responses: _____

Number of **"Never or hardly ever"** responses: _____

TOTAL: _____

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What's My Personal Style?

Read the following descriptions. Check the ONE that sounds the most like you. **To learn what your answer means, see pages 13–14 in *Being Your Best*.**

_____ **1. I like to be alone much of the time.** I like other people, but I mostly like to play by myself. I like to be the one to choose what I do and play. I like doing my own work more than working in a group. I have one or two best friends who I like to be with the most.

_____ **2. I like to be with people most of the time.** I like working in groups rather than working alone. I like to make choices in a group. I have many friends. I have best friends, but I like being with all of my friends. I often get bored when I'm alone.

_____ **3. I sometimes like to work in a group, but I also like to do my own work.** Sometimes I like to be alone with no one around but me. At other times, I like to play with a whole group of kids. I have friends and like being with them, but I don't mind being alone.

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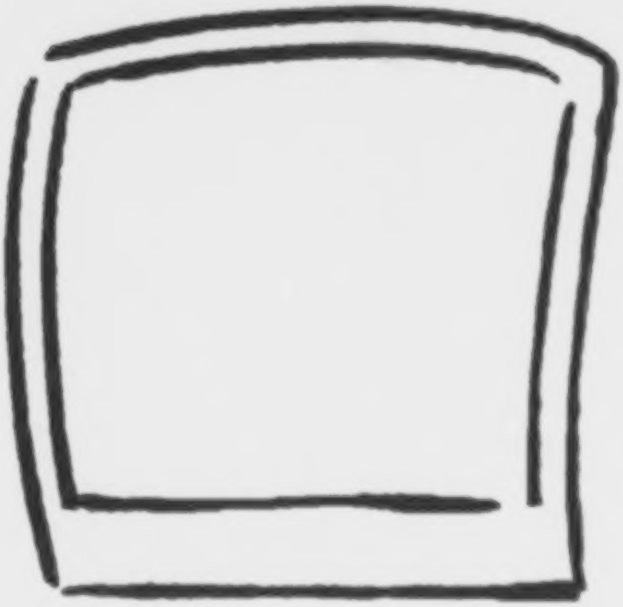
A Snapshot of Me

What you are on the outside and who you are on the inside combine to make up the real you. Fill in these pages. Use extra paper if you need to. When you're done, you'll have a more complete picture of the person you are right now. Think of it as a snapshot of you today. **To learn what your answers mean, see page 13 in *Being Your Best.***

Here's what I look like:
(Draw a picture of yourself here, or paste in a photo.)



1. Things I like about myself are: ______________________________

____

2. My best character traits are: ______________________________

____

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A Snapshot of Me (continued)

3. Traits I want to make stronger are: ______________________________

____

4. For me, making and keeping friends is:

____ mostly hard ____ mostly easy ____ sometimes hard and sometimes easy

5. For me, getting along with my family is:

____ mostly hard ____ mostly easy ____ sometimes hard and sometimes easy

6. I work better:

____ alone ____ in a group ____ both ways

7. A special talent I want to develop is: ______________________________

____

____

8. My secret goal is: ______________________________

____

9. When I think about the future, here's what I want to be like: ______________

____

____

10. Steps I can take to reach my goals are: ______________________________

____

____

____

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Building My Character Muscles

Name ______________________ Date ______________________

Character muscle I want to build: ______________________

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

How am I doing? _____ **Need more practice** _____ **I'm improving** _____ **Great!**

I'll work another week on this trait. _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

I'll start working on a different trait. _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

Here's why: ______________________

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Lesson 2

CARING

This lesson helps children learn the meaning of caring and explore four ways to show others that they care: through thoughts, words, actions, and gifts.

Concepts

Kindness, sharing, helpfulness, generosity, service

Being Your Best Chapter

"Caring" (pages 17–27)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "6 Ways to Grow in Caring" handout (leader's guide page 19)
- *Optional: Kids' Random Acts of Kindness* (see leader's guide "Resources" on page 18)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 17–18 in *Being Your Best*. After reading, ask questions like:

- **What happened in the story?**
- **How did Taylor show that he cared?**
- **Did the man show that he cared about Taylor? How?**
- **Did Taylor's mom show that she cared? Who did she care about? How can you tell?**
- **Was it right for Taylor to give away his own new shoes and socks? Why or why not?**
- **How else could Taylor have shown that he cared about the man?**
- **What would you have done if you were Taylor?**
- **How do you think Taylor felt inside about this experience?**

Caring—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 19–20 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What does *caring* mean?**
- **What are some examples of people showing that they care?**
- **Is it easy or hard to show someone that you care? Why?**
- **What did the example of the mourning dove mean to you about caring?**

How Can You Show That You Care?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 21–22 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **How can your thoughts help you show others that you care about them?**
- **What are some things you could say to tell someone that you care about him or her?**
- **What are some things you can do to show caring?**
- **How do gifts show caring?**

Distribute the "6 Ways to Grow in Caring" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on the closet door at home.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* pages 23–24)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has three "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Caring" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show caring? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **A boy at school always pushes in line ahead of you. If you're out at recess, he often takes the ball away from you. Can you try to be caring toward him? How can you do that and still stick up for yourself?**
- **A man down the street often yells at you when you walk on his grass. You and the other kids in the neighborhood don't like him much. How might you learn to care for the man? What might you do that will help him and you, too?**

Activities in the Children's Book

You may want to introduce the activities by sharing the book *Kids' Random Acts of Kindness* (see leader's guide "Resources," page 18) and talking about the different types of caring it portrays.

Make Kindness Cards

(*Being Your Best* pages 24–25)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Kindness Cards" handout (leader's guide page 21)
- Pens or fine-line markers
- Scissors
- Shoe boxes or other small boxes (such as the boxes personal checks come in)
- *Optional:* Materials for decorating the boxes (such as construction or wrapping paper, glue sticks, markers, ribbons, and yarn)

Together with children, brainstorm acts of kindness they can do for others in their family, neighborhood, or faith community. Encourage children to use this list of ideas or think of their own to fill in their handout. After they write their ideas for kindness acts on the handout, have them cut on the dotted lines to create cards to place inside their boxes. Encourage children to take the boxes home and keep them in a handy place. Every day, children may choose one card from the box and try to do that act of kindness at least once. They can keep adding new cards to the box, if they wish.

Variation: Make a "Kindness Box" for your classroom or group. Have children create cards of kind acts they can do for each other at school or during your group meeting. Ask volunteers to make

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or decorate a box or some other container to hold the cards. Then, at the beginning of the day, each child can draw a card from the box and follow through by doing the kind act secretly. At the end of the day, have children guess what the kind acts were.

Plan and Do a Service

(*Being Your Best* pages 25–26)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "My Service Plan" handout (leader's guide page 22)
- *For Variation:* Copies of "10 Steps to Planning a Service Project" handout (leader's guide pages 23–24)

Talk about the meaning of service and why serving others is a form of caring. Discuss with children what kinds of services need parental permission (*examples:* helping at a senior center, assisting a neighbor with shopping, buying gifts, or giving belongings to others). Explain to children: **It's important to ask parents for permission, so they know what's going on and to make sure that what you're planning is okay with them.**

Distribute copies of the "My Service Plan" handout and allow time for children to complete them.

Variation: Follow the instructions in "10 Steps to Planning a Service Project" to carry out a service as a group. (This variation may be best for older children.)

Write a Poem About Caring

(*Being Your Best* page 26)

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the sample poem:

> **Caring means saying nice things to others:**
> **My mother, my father, my sisters, my brothers,**
> **My neighbors, my teachers, my friends near and far.**
> **Caring shows people how special they are.**

Then assist children in writing their own poems, as needed. If students have difficulty, encourage them to write simpler poems or to complete the line "Caring means . . ." in as many ways as they can, without worrying about rhyming.

Variation: As a group, compose a song about caring, using the tune of a familiar song.

Care for the Environment

(*Being Your Best* pages 26–27)

Talk about the environment and why people need to care for it. As a group, brainstorm a list of things children can do to help conserve and preserve the environment. If you wish, plan a class environmental project. Your group might create inventions or sculptures using only salvaged materials, pick up trash on the school grounds or at a community park, or research fund-raisers that are environmentally friendly (for example, selling gift wrap that's made from recycled paper).

Additional Group Activities

Welcome Kit

Materials Needed

- Items for the kit (see ideas in the activity description below)
- Bag, box, or other container
- Markers, paints, stickers, or other items for decorating the container

Make a welcome kit for kids who are new to the school, group, or community. Discuss what the kit will include and who will gather items and help decorate it. (For example, a school kit might offer a map of the building, a school handbook, pens and pencils, or information on activities like band or an after-school program.)

What Might Happen?

This activity can help children understand cause-and-effect relationships and encourage empathy, another form of caring. You might wish to begin by explaining cause-and-effect relationships using words like these: **Cause*is what happens* before *an action—it makes an action happen. The* effect *happens* after *an action—it's the result of the action.*** Then explain the activity using words like these: **I'm going to tell you about something that happened to someone. Listen and see if you can guess why the person has a problem, what you could do to help, and what might happen if you help in that way.** Children may suggest a variety of reasons for the problems, as well as a wide range of solutions. As they consider different ideas, they'll broaden their understanding of people's varying thoughts, needs, and feelings.

Read each situation and discuss the questions:

At lunchtime, a student is sitting at a table alone, crying.

- **Why do you think the student is crying? What might the *cause* be?**
- **What could you do to help the student feel better? What action could you take?**
- **What are the many things the student might do after you show kindness? What might happen next—what could the *effect* of your action be?**

It's almost bedtime, and your mom is working in the kitchen, packing lunches for tomorrow. She's not smiling or talking.

- **Why do you think your mom is so serious and unsmiling?**
- **What could you do to help put a smile on her face?**
- **What might your mom do after you show that you care? What might happen next?**

At recess, a student stands against the fence and doesn't participate in any activities.

- **Why do you think the student doesn't join in?**
- **What are some things you could do to help the student participate?**
- **What might the student do after you're kind and caring? What might happen next?**

An elderly neighbor sits alone on the front step each day. He never looks at you or says hello when you go by.

- **Why do you think he doesn't look at you or say hello?**
- **What are some things you could say or do to be friendly to him?**
- **What might he do after you're friendly? What might happen next?**

Your brother is grumpy and tells you to leave him alone.

- **Why might your brother be acting this way?**
- **What could you do to show your brother that you care and want to help?**
- **What might your brother do after you're kind? What might happen next?**

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

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Resources

Kids' Random Acts of Kindness by the editors of Conari Press (Emeryville, CA: Conari Press, 1994). Kids from around the world tell their own stories of kind acts. From whimsical and funny to moving and thoughtful, these stories reveal the surprisingly insightful ways children feel about kindness and compassion.

160 Ways to Help the World: Community Service Projects for Young People by Linda Leeb Duper (New York: Facts on File, 1996). This is a great resource for teachers, community leaders, youth group leaders, and neighborhood activists who want to get kids more involved in service to others. It contains information on how to start community projects and keep kids interested.

4-H Youth Development
Families, 4-H & Nutrition
CSREES/USDA
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-2225
(202) 720-2908
www.4H-usa.org

4-H, which stands for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, is an educational program and an organization for youth ages 5–19. Members learn practical skills about things that interest them such as cooking, raising animals, the environment, computers, and leadership, and they acquire life skills such as decision making and good communication.

Youth as Resources
1700 K Street NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20006-3817
(202) 261-4131
www.yar.org

Youth as Resources is a community-based program that provides young people with small grants to design and carry out service projects that address social problems and contribute to significant community change.

Youth Service America
1101 15th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 296-2992
www.ysa.org

Youth Service America (YSA) is a resource center and an alliance of more than 200 organizations committed to increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities for young Americans to serve locally, nationally, or globally. YSA's mission is to strengthen the effectiveness and the scale of the youth service movement. The Web site has links to community service opportunities based on zip codes.

NOTE: See also *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects* and the Corporation for National Service, both described on leader's guide page 30.

6 Ways to Grow in Caring

Care about others. Be kind, helpful, and sharing.

Ask about other people. Be a good listener.

Respect all people, property, animals, and the earth.

Include others. Watch to see if anyone feels lonely or left out, and include that person.

Never hold a grudge. Forgive others, and they will probably forgive you, too.

Give to others. Help other people feel good, learn, and grow.

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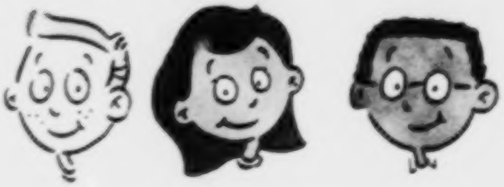
Guidelines for Deciding What to Do

Use these guidelines to help you talk together about the "What If?" situations in *Being Your Best*.

First, get the facts. Have someone read the situation out loud. Then summarize what all of you heard.



Share ideas. What would *you* do if you were in this situation? How might you solve the problem? Share your ideas and listen to what others have to say. Ask questions if you don't understand.

Borrow and build on other people's ideas. Work together to make your ideas stronger. For example, if someone says, "I think the girl should talk to her teacher," someone else might add, "To the teacher or another grown-up."

Disagree respectfully. Using respectful language means being polite and thinking about other people's feelings when you speak. Avoid name-calling, put-downs, and teasing, which aren't respectful. You might say, "I understand what you mean, but maybe this would work better."

Be open to other points of view. Remember that sometimes there might be more than one right answer.

YOU'RE BOTH RIGHT!

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Kindness Cards

Fill in the blanks, cut out each message, and use all of these ideas to plan kind surprises for others.

A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________	A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________
A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________	A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________
A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________	A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________
A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________	A kind act I can do is ____________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________

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My Service Plan

Use this form to plan a caring service for someone.

IMPORTANT! Remember to check with your parent or guardian before doing a service.

Name of person I want to do a service for:

Here's why I chose this person:

Here's what I'll do:

Here's when I'll do the service:

Here's what happened when I did the service:

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10 Steps to Planning a Service Project

Use these steps to plan a service project for your school, community, or group.

1. Research your project. First, think of a problem you could help improve or someone (or something) you'd like to help. Then think of a project you could do to solve the problem or help in some way. Ask yourself:

- What would I most like to do?
- What am I most able to do?
- What do I have enough time or money to do?
- What might make the biggest difference?

* * *

2. Form a team. If you don't want to work alone or you can't do your project by yourself, ask others to help.

- Gather people who are interested in your project and who will work with you until it's finished.
- Ask family members, friends, or people in your school, neighborhood, faith community, or scout group.
- Ask people of all ages. Ask older kids and adults, as well as people your own age.

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3. Find a sponsor. Ask a responsible adult (parent, teacher, scout leader) to be your sponsor. This person can help you talk to other adults whose help you might need.

* * *

4. Make a plan. Follow these steps:

- Decide where your team will meet to talk about your project and how you'll get there.
- Discuss what your goal is (what you want to do).
- Make a schedule. How long will your project take? When will you do it? When will you be done?
- Figure out how much your project will cost. Will you need money? How much? What do you need the money for? How will you get it?
- Think about your project. Will it be easy to do? Will it be too hard? How can you improve it?

* * *

5. Think about who you'll be helping. Do these people (or the animals, place, or environment) really need your help? Find out as much as you can about those you want to serve. Ask yourself:

- What do they need?

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- Do they want my help?
- When is a good time to help them?
- Is there anything else I need to know?

* * *

6. Decide where you'll do your service. Will you go to the people (or animals) you plan to serve? Or will they come to you? If you're working on behalf of a place or the environment, do you need transportation? Consider:

- If *you* go to them, visit the place ahead of time. Is there enough room to do your project? What will you have to bring? How will you get the materials there?
- If *they* are coming to you, make sure you have everything ready when they arrive.

* * *

7. Get permission. Check to see if you need permission to do your project. You might need to ask:

- Your teacher, principal, or other people at school
- Your group leader
- Your dad or mom
- Your neighborhood or community leaders
- Owners of any place or thing you'll use

8. Spread the word. Let other people know about your project. Make a flyer to hand out or posters to display where everyone can see them.

* * *

9. Raise money (if you need to). If you or your group needs money to do your project, think of some ways to raise it. Here are some suggestions:

- Hold a sale (such as a bake sale or rummage sale).
- Charge a fee for a service such as washing cars, walking dogs, or raking leaves.
- Ask local businesses, neighbors, members of your faith community, or others for donations.

* * *

10. When your project has ended, evaluate it. Did you meet the goal you set? What went well? What could have gone better? If you were to do this project again, how could you improve it?

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Lesson 3

CITIZENSHIP

In this lesson, children learn how to grow in good citizenship by showing respect, getting involved in their group or community, and serving others at home and in the world.

Concepts

Participation, good citizenship, community service, democracy, love of freedom, activism

Being Your Best Chapter

"Citizenship" (pages 28–40)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "7 Ways to Be a Good Citizen" handout (leader's guide page 31)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 28–30 in *Being Your Best*. During the discussion, be sensitive to the fact that there might be a child or children in your group who have been or are in foster care. Lead the discussion in a way that preserves respect for a foster child. After reading, ask questions like:

- **What happened in the story?**
- **Why do you think Aubyn cared so much about foster children?**
- **What did Aubyn do to show good citizenship?**
- **Was it right for Aubyn to use her own money? What happened when she did?**
- **Why do you think the foster children were grateful to Aubyn?**
- **Are there other needs that foster children might have? What do you think they are?**
- **Is there something you might do to help? What would you do? How would you do it?**

Citizenship—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 30–32 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What is a *democracy?* What can you do in a democracy? What *can't* you do?**
- **What might happen if we didn't have rules for people driving cars?**
- **What might happen if there were no rules in a school? In a family?**
- **What are some rules that we have to follow? Why do we need them?**
- **How do you know if rules aren't fair? How can you change them if they're unfair?**
- **What kind of rights (freedoms) do you have? How does it feel to have rights like these?**
- **What is a *citizen?* What does it mean to be a good citizen?**
- **What are your responsibilities as a good citizen? Besides following rules, what might you do to show that you're a good citizen?**

How Can You Be a Good Citizen?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 32–34 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What are three important ways to show that you're a good citizen?**

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- **How can you show respect in your family? With your friends? In school?**
- **How can you get more involved in your school or in your community? How would this show that you're a good citizen?**
- **Can you think of a new rule or law that's needed? How could you help?**
- **What does it mean to *serve*? What can you do to serve in your family? In your community? At your place of worship?**

Distribute the "7 Ways to Be a Good Citizen" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on the closet door at home.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* pages 35–36)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20) and "Telling or Tattling?" handout (leader's guide page 32)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has four "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Citizenship" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does each solution show (or not show) citizenship? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

In discussing the "What If?" scenarios, help children understand that there are times when it's important to talk to a trusted adult. For example, no one should hurt animals, and no one should ever be hurt by an adult. Children may wonder if talking to an adult is tattling. To help children distinguish between reporting serious information and tattling, use the "Telling or Tattling?" handout. Point out and discuss the differences.

NOTE: If you, as the adult leader, receive any disclosures of abuse from children, refer to the information on page 4 of the "Introduction" for guidelines on what to do.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **You come to school one day and find that someone has put graffiti on the windows of your classroom. As a good citizen, do you have a responsibility to do anything? Why or why not? What might you do? Is there anything you and your classmates can do to reduce graffiti in your neighborhood or community?**
- **Your parents don't vote at elections. You'd like them to get more involved, but you're not sure how to tell them so. How might you encourage your parents to vote, in a way that shows respect for them?**

Activities in the Children's Book

Learn About Good Citizens

(*Being Your Best* page 37)

Materials Needed

- Books, videos, or articles about important citizens—current or historical
- Chart paper (such as newsprint) and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
- Writing paper and pens or pencils

Tell children that it's possible to find many examples of good citizens in the past and present. Name a few well-known good citizens (such as Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, or Benjamin Franklin) and ask children to offer the names of others, both historical and current. Ask children: **Why do you think these people are or were good citizens? What have they done to show good citizenship?** Using the qualities listed in "How Can You Be a Good Citizen?" (pages 32–34 in *Being Your Best*), make a chart of the qualities of good citizens.

Next, invite children to read or view the books, articles, or videos and select the citizen that they most admire. Then have them do one of the following activities:

- Write a short report about their citizen. Have children describe who their citizen is and what that person has done to show good citizenship. Ask volunteers to read their reports to the rest of the group. If you wish, compare each citizen's qualities to those on the chart your group made up.
- Role-play what their citizen accomplished. (This will work best if children pair up or form teams.) Then, as a group, discuss what each citizen did to show good citizenship.
- Together with children, use the information on the "good citizenship" chart to identify good citizens in their own communities.

Have Family Meetings

(*Being Your Best* pages 37–38)

Materials Needed

- *For Variation:* Chart paper (such as newsprint) or posterboard; markers

Discuss the importance of family meetings, and then encourage children to initiate these meetings at home. To start, children and their families can talk about the rules at home and the consequences of breaking them. They can also discuss democratic ways to solve disagreements. Remind children that some of the ways to solve problems include brainstorming the possible solutions, looking at all sides, and voting on the solution that will be best for *everyone*. Suggest that family meetings be used as a time to plan family activities. Once the meetings have been established at their homes, invite children to give examples of things they do in their meetings. Remember to emphasize that parents always have "veto power" in these meetings; talk about why this is important in families.

Variation: Suggest having regular classroom or group meetings to set up democratic rules and make sure they're being followed. Encourage children to first brainstorm rules, and then choose which ones they think are the most important for the class or group. Let everyone discuss what the rules should be, and then vote for the best four or five of them using the instructions for the "Voting Game" (see the "Go with Your Parents to Vote" activity on the next page; be sure to note the materials needed). Write the new rules on chart paper and decorate this "poster" together. You might tell children: **You've just written and voted on your own set of rules. This means our group is a democracy, and all of us are its citizens.** Suggest that children use the "Voting Game" at home as a way to vote during family meetings, too.

Encourage children to consider what rewards and consequences, if any, there should be for following or not following the rules. If you wish, have the group vote on these.

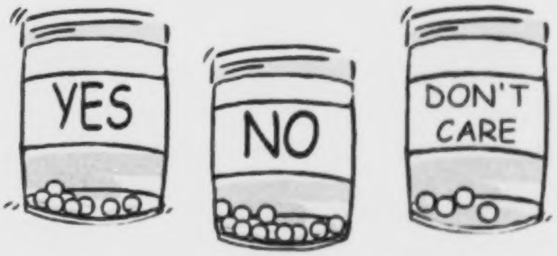
Go with Your Parents to Vote

(*Being Your Best* page 39)

Materials Needed

- Marble for each child
- Three jars labeled "Yes," "No," and "Don't Care"

This activity—the "Voting Game"—is designed to help children understand the importance of voting, so they're inspired to encourage their parents to vote. Start by having children brainstorm a new rule that the class or group should follow each day. Next, give each child a marble. Then place the three labeled jars on a desk in a private area—to show that voting can be a secret activity. Ask everyone to vote on the new rule, choosing "Yes" if they agree with it, "No" if they disagree with it, and "Don't Care" if they're not sure or if it's not a big deal to them one way or another. Children can cast their vote by putting their marble in the appropriate jar. After the vote, have children count the number of marbles in each jar. Tell them to notice the number of marbles in the "Don't Care" jar. Ask children: **Do you think those votes would have changed the results for the rule if they had been placed in either the "Yes" or "No" jar?** Explain that people have the power to change results—but *only* if they cast their vote. This is why it's important for adults to go out and vote!



Additional Group Activities

Welcome Map

Materials Needed

- Chalkboard and chalk
- Paper
- Colored pencils and markers or crayons

Make a map of the school for new students, or a map of the community for newcomers. (Or, if you're working in a faith community, create a map of your place of worship.) Together with children, brainstorm what places should appear on the map, and then draw the map on the chalkboard, following their suggestions. Have children use the chalkboard drawing as a guide to creating their own map on a sheet of paper, decorating it any way they wish. Keep these maps together, and then give one to each new student or community member who arrives.

Variation: Make a map that's drawn to scale as an all-school math activity.

Learn About Your Government

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Phone Form," "Permission Form," and "What I Learned About My Government" handouts (leader's guide pages 33, 34, and 35)

Take children on a field trip to your state capitol, city hall, or county offices to learn how rules or laws are made. Arrange for a guided tour by calling ahead of time and asking a staff member (such as someone in public relations) to assist you in setting up the tour. If you wish, consider involving children in the planning. When you first contact the government office, let the staff member helping you know that a child will be calling to make the actual appointment (arrange an exact time for the call). Let the children decide, as a group, what information needs to be given over the phone. Write this information into a script for the caller, or use the "Phone Form" handout as a guide. Encourage the designated child to practice with other children in your class or group before making the actual call.

Prior to the tour, make sure you have a signed permission form from each child's parent or guardian. Your school or organization may have a standard form; if not, you may want to use the form on page 34 of this leader's guide.

On the day of the tour, distribute the "What I Learned About My Government" handout. Children can use this form to ask the tour guide questions and write down the answers. (Or, if you're working with younger children, you may want to save the handout to use as part of a group discussion after the tour.)

Lobby For (or Against) a Bill or Law

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Sample Letter," "Letter *For* a Bill," and "Letter *Against* a Bill" handouts (leader's guide pages 36, 37, and 38)
- Drawing paper
- Colored pencils and crayons or markers
- *Optional:* Chart paper (such as newsprint) and markers

Ask your city, county, or state offices for a list of issues under consideration. Identify several issues children might be interested in and share them with your class or group. Explain the issues, letting children know that they can be *for* or *against* each one. Let them vote on one issue they're most interested in and wish to support or oppose.

Let children know that they can tell the people who make laws how they would like them to vote. Children can write letters to inform a lawmaker about what they want (called *lobbying*). Explain to children: **Someday, you will be voters. Your lawmakers care about what you think.** Go over the "Sample Letter" handout, showing children all the features of a letter to a lawmaker. Suggest that children follow this sample to create their own letter, using the "Letter *For* a Bill" or the "Letter *Against* a Bill." (Or, if you wish, write the letter as a group on a piece of chart paper.) In addition to the letter, suggest that children include their own drawing of how the issue affects them.

Good Citizen Stickers

Materials Needed

- Blank adhesive labels or pieces of paper and tape
- Fine-line markers

Make "good citizen" stickers for the class or group to give to those who show good citizenship. Invite children to brainstorm many ways to be a good citizen. Then have them decorate the adhesive labels or pieces of paper to reward each person who has shown good citizenship. (Or you can award the stickers to children yourself.) Examples of actions to reward might include helping others, being on time, putting things away, following rules, and using kind words.

Helping Hands Mural

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint)
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Use the following poem as the centerpiece for a mural on citizenship:

> **Reach your hands out**
> **to help those about.**

Write the poem in the center of a large sheet of chart paper. As a group, read the poem aloud. Ask children: **What are some**

ways your hands help others? How can you show good citizenship with your hands? Together, brainstorm some ideas. Then have every child in your class or group trace her or his hand onto the sheet of paper around the poem. (If your group is small, have each child trace *both* hands.) Suggest that children decorate the hands in some way that illustrates a helping action. For example, a child who suggests writing a letter might draw a pen in his hand; a child who suggests helping a neighbor fix a door might draw a hammer in her hand.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Have children put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference by Barbara A. Lewis (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1995). This book contains all kinds of ideas for service projects for kids—from simple things they can do on their own to large-scale commitments that involve whole communities. Topics include animals, community development, crime fighting, the environment, friendship, hunger, literacy, government, safety, senior citizens, and more. Written for ages 11 and up, but useful for younger children, with a leader's help.

The Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose—and Turn Creative Thinking into Positive Action by Barbara A. Lewis (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1998). This book tells kids how to work with different levels of government (local, state, and national). It provides easy-to-understand instructions on initiating a bill with a sponsor, and explains many different ways to lobby and make positive changes in the community. Written for ages 11 and up, but useful for younger children, with a leader's help.

Corporation for National Service
1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525
(202) 606-5000
www.cns.gov

The Corporation for National Service matches people of all ages with opportunities to serve their community and the nation—in topic areas like literacy, poverty, crime, and environmental problems. Check out the Web site to learn how to get involved and to find links to other volunteer opportunities.

Kids Voting USA
398 South Mill Avenue, Suite 304
Tempe, AZ 85281
(480) 921-3727
www.kidsvotingusa.org

This organization makes it possible for kids to visit polling sites on election days and to vote on the same issues and candidates that adults are voting on. Children who get involved can increase their parents' participation in the vote.

Voices of Youth
www.unicef.org/voy

At this Web site, kids around the world can share their ideas for the future. The site also has links for kids interested in activism and children's rights.

7 Ways to Be a Good Citizen

Care about your community, state or province, and country. Obey the laws and rules.

Improve something in your home or neighborhood.

Take the time to learn about how your government works.

Involve yourself by becoming a leader at school or at your place of worship.

Zero in on something that needs fixing and work with others to do the job.

Encourage your parents and other adults you know to vote.

Never forget to show respect for people, animals, plants, and property.

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Telling or Tattling?

At times, you need to tell an adult about something serious that has happened. Sometimes, though, children complain about what another child has done when it's not a good idea to tell. This is called *tattling*. It means you're trying to get the person into trouble, or maybe just trying to get attention by complaining about something small. How can you decide what's tattling and what's really something important to tell? Here are some questions you can ask yourself:

"Are the actions bothering everyone, or just one person?"

If only one person is bothered, ask yourself the next question. If lots of people are bothered, solve the problem together if you can. If you can't, ask an adult for help.

"Is the problem something that I can fix myself?"

Fix it if you can. You could ask the person to stop by saying, "Please don't do that anymore."

"Can I ignore the problem easily?"

Ignore it if you can.

"Is someone or something really being hurt?"

If a person or an animal is getting hurt, tell an adult.

IMPORTANT! It's NOT tattling to get help with a serious problem. If someone is damaging property, harming a person or an animal, hurting *your* body, or doing something that scares or worries you, talk to an adult you trust *right* away.

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Phone Form

Use this form to help you set up a visit to a local government office. Fill it out, and then rehearse the script several times before making the phone call.

"Hello. May I please speak to ______________________________,
(name of the *contact*—the person you're calling)
or someone who talks to the public."

"My name is ______________________________ and I'm from
(your name)
______________________________."
(name of your school or group)

"Here's why I'm calling:" (Write what you're going to say or ask.)

____

____

____

(Write down what the person tells you.)

____

____

____

____

____

"Thank you very much. Good-bye."

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Permission Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are planning a field trip to ______________________________ on
(place)

______________________________. So that your child may attend,
(date)

please complete and sign the form below and return it to me by

______________________________.
(date)

Please feel free to call me with any questions.

Sincerely yours,

____

Telephone: ______________________________

Best time to reach me: ______________________________

- -

I give permission for my child ______________________________ to
(first and last name)

participate in a field trip to ______________________________ on
(place)

______________________________.
(date)

I understand that children will be transported by (circle one of the following) bus, car, on foot; that they will be chaperoned by adults; and that all precautions will be taken to ensure their safety.

Signed ______________________________
(parent or guardian's signature)

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What I Learned About My Government

Use this form to write down what you learned at the local government office.

Name of place we visited: ____________________

What I learned:

How are laws or rules made? ____________________

Who makes the rules or laws? ____________________

How can citizens start a rule or law? ____________________

How can citizens lobby (show what they think about the rule or law)? ____________________

I remembered to thank the tour guide. **Yes** ________ **No** ________

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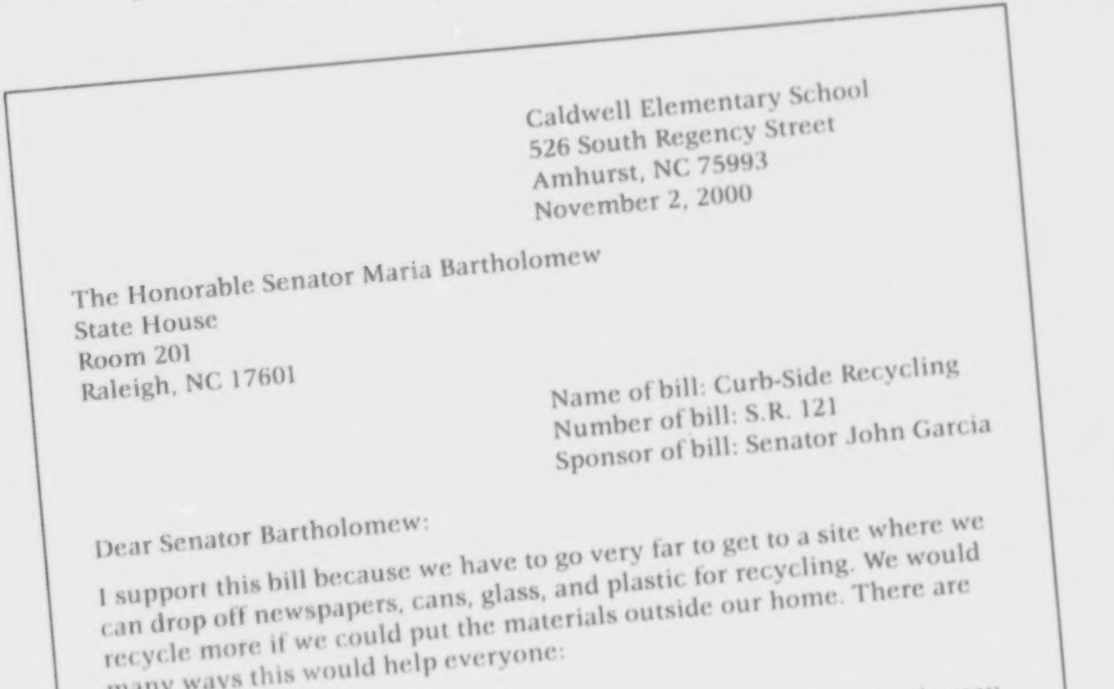
Sample Letter

Use this letter as an example to help you plan your own letter for or against a bill. Then write a letter yourself using either the "Letter *For* a Bill" or the "Letter *Against* a Bill" handout.



Caldwell Elementary School
526 South Regency Street
Amhurst, NC 75993
November 2, 2000

The Honorable Senator Maria Bartholomew
State House
Room 201
Raleigh, NC 17601

Name of bill: Curb-Side Recycling
Number of bill: S.R. 121
Sponsor of bill: Senator John Garcia

Dear Senator Bartholomew:

I support this bill because we have to go very far to get to a site where we can drop off newspapers, cans, glass, and plastic for recycling. We would recycle more if we could put the materials outside our home. There are many ways this would help everyone:

- It would help our environment.
- It would save money because newspapers, cans, glass, and plastic may be recycled.
- It would mean less junk in landfills.
- We shouldn't just throw everything away—we can reuse materials instead.

Please support this view. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Theo Harris

Theo Harris
Third Grade, Mrs. Lewis's Class

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Letter *For* a Bill

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

Name of bill: ____________________

Number of bill: ____________________

Sponsor of bill: ____________________

Dear ____________________:

I support this bill because: ______________________________

____

There are many ways this would help everyone: ____________________

____

____

____

____

Please support this view. Thank you.

Sincerely,

____

____

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Letter *Against* a Bill

____
____
____
____

____
____
____
____

Name of bill: ____________________
Number of bill: __________________
Sponsor of bill: __________________

Dear ____________________:

I am against this bill because: ____
____

There are many ways this bill would not be helpful: ____________________
____
____
____
____

Please support this view. Thank you.

Sincerely,

____
____

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Lesson 4

COOPERATION

The primary goal of this lesson is to help children learn the meaning of cooperation and explore ways to work with others to solve conflicts and ease angry feelings.

Concepts

Getting along with others, peacefulness, conflict resolution, staying calm

Being Your Best Chapter

"Cooperation" (pages 41–52)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "TALKS—5 Steps for Talking About a Problem" handout (leader's guide page 46)
- Copies of "CALM Down—4 Steps to Easing Angry Feelings" handout (leader's guide page 47)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 41–43 in *Being Your Best*. As you discuss the story, be sensitive to the fact that there might be children in your group whose first language isn't English. Lead the discussion in a way that preserves respect for these children. After reading, ask questions like:

- **What happened in the story?**
- **How did Kanesha help the Vietnamese children? How did she help the other children?**
- **Why did the Vietnamese children cooperate with Kanesha?**
- **Why do you think the African-American kids didn't want to cooperate with Kanesha and the Vietnamese kids at first?**
- **Did Kanesha help herself? How?**
- **What do you think Kanesha's mother meant when she said, "Just ignore it. When they're talking about you, that means you're on their minds"? Do you think this is a good way to deal with name-calling and teasing? Why or why not? Did it work for Kanesha?**

Cooperation—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 43–44 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What does *cooperation* mean?**
- **What are some ways you cooperate in your family, school, and neighborhood?**
- **What happens when people *don't* cooperate?**
- **Why should you learn to cooperate? What does it do for you? What does it do for others?**

How Can You Cooperate?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 44–48 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What does *conflict* mean?**
- **What does TALKS stand for?**

Give children copies of the TALKS handout and go over it together. Have two volunteers read aloud the example on page 46 in *Being Your Best*. Ask:

- **How did Anika and Jamal follow each TALKS step? How did using TALKS help them cooperate?**

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How did talking about the problem stop them from getting in a fight?

- **Is it okay to be angry sometimes? What is one thing that you get angry about? What do you do when you feel angry?**
- **What does CALM stand for?**

Give children copies of the CALM handout and go over it together. Ask:

- **What are some ways to let out angry feelings? How can using the CALM steps help you feel less angry?**
- **How can talking about a conflict help?**

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* page 49)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)
- *Optional:* Copies of "Telling or Tattling?" handout (leader's guide page 32)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has four "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Cooperation" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show cooperation? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

While discussing the "What If?" scenarios, help children understand that there will be times when they can't solve a problem by themselves. Tell children that it's best to ask an adult for help if (1) using TALKS doesn't ease a conflict with another person, (2) the other person won't cooperate and only makes the problem worse, or (3) you're afraid that the other person will hurt you.

Let children know that it's important to go to an adult they trust, such as a parent, teacher, coach, or group leader. Explain that it's also important to be fair when telling about the problem. Instead of blaming, tattling, or saying mean things about the other person, children should tell the adult exactly what happened and how they've already tried to work things out. Explain that an adult can help children talk and solve the problem together. You may want to use the "Telling or Tattling?" handout to help children understand the difference between tattling and reporting a serious problem.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **The girl who sits behind you in class won't stop bothering you. She kicks your chair when you're trying to read and pokes you with her pencil when you're trying to write. Yesterday, you turned around and told her, "DON'T!" but that just made your teacher frown at you. How might you help the girl stop this behavior without getting her—or yourself—in trouble? What can you do if she doesn't cooperate?**
- **The kids in your group argue a lot. They bump each other out of lines, push, shove, and call each other names. What might you do to help everyone learn to cooperate more? How can you solve this problem without seeming bossy?**

Activities in the Children's Book

Make a Cooperation Collage

(*Being Your Best* page 50)

Materials Needed

- Magazines for cutting out pictures
- Colored pencils or markers
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Paper or posterboard
- *For Variation:* Chart paper (such as newsprint)

If you wish, encourage children to work on this activity in pairs or groups. Ask children: **What do you think a picture showing cooperation looks like?** Or: **What do you think a picture of *not* cooperating looks like?** Suggest scenes such as children sharing candy (or arguing about it), taking turns in line (or butting in), helping each other (or getting in the way), and so on. Allow them to brainstorm examples on their own. Then have them look in magazines to find pictures or words that show these ideas, or encourage them to draw or write their own. Have children cut out their pictures or words and glue them to their posters, overlapping the edges for a collage.

When the posters are complete, ask each child, pair, or group to show their collages to the larger group. Ask them why they chose the pictures or words. If appropriate, ask: **How did it feel to work together on this project? How did it feel to cooperate?**

Variation: Have each child draw his or her own picture of a scene that shows cooperation. Then combine all of the pictures on chart paper for a collage or mural.

Teach Your Family About TALKS

(*Being Your Best* pages 50–51)

Materials Needed

- Posterboard
- Markers
- Copies of "TALKS—5 Steps for Talking About a Problem" handout (leader's guide page 46)

Using the information in "Have Family Meetings" in the "Citizenship" chapter of *Being Your Best* (pages 37–38), tell children: **Family meetings are one way that a family can make plans and solve problems together. TALKS can help people solve problems and make decisions in family meetings.** If you wish, have children role-play a problem that could be solved with TALKS in a family meeting, or encourage them to try the activity at home and later share what happened with the rest of the class or group.

Using the handout as a guide, have children create TALKS posters to display at home or to use at family meetings. If you wish, keep the posters simple by suggesting that children use only the first line of each paragraph ("Talk about what happened," "Act and talk politely"), or even just the first word or two ("Talk," "Act politely," "Listen," "Keep trying," "Share").

Variation: Have children work together on a poster for the classroom or the group meeting area. Refer to it during discussions, when making decisions, or when resolving issues as a class or group.

Make a Cooperative Chores Chart

(*Being Your Best* page 51)

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint)
- Markers or pens
- Ruler or yardstick
- Index cards or pieces of paper
- Removable tape

Together, make a "Cooperative Chores Chart" for your class or group. Ask children to brainstorm all of the jobs that need to be done in your classroom or meeting area, and write them on the chart paper. Then ask children which jobs, if any, seem related (such as picking up books and putting them away, or cleaning the countertops and washing the sink). Group the ideas together by writing them down.

On a fresh sheet of chart paper, have children draw a chart like the one pictured below. Have them list the chores on the left-hand side of the paper, and the days of the week or the dates of meetings days along the top. With a ruler or yardstick, help them draw the lines to divide up the chart (be sure each box is big enough to hold an index card). Tell children that each chore now has a box for each day it needs to be done, and that one of their names will be placed in each box. Show them how to read the chart to see who's responsible for each chore on each day.

Ask each child to write his or her name on an index card or a piece of paper. Then collect the names and mix them up. Ask a volunteer to draw names for each job and use removable tape to stick them in the appropriate box on the chart. If you prefer, assign each child one job for the entire week, and then rotate names or draw new names for the following week until each child has had a chance to do a job.

Make a Cooperation Log

(*Being Your Best* page 52)

Materials Needed

- One notebook for each child
- Pens or pencils
- *Optional:* Materials for decorating the notebooks (such as paints, markers, colored pencils, pictures cut from magazines, glue sticks, ribbons, and stickers)

Ask children: **What are some different ways we cooperate?** Allow them to brainstorm as you suggest different scenarios in which cooperation is helpful, such as: in the classroom, during a group meeting, on the playground, at home, with friends, with people who are different from you, or with people you don't know very well. Suggest that people can cooperate through the things they do (or don't do) and also through the things they say (or don't say).

After brainstorming several possibilities, tell children that they'll be keeping "Cooperation Logs." Explain that in these logs they'll write the ways they cooperate every day. Give children their notebooks and, if you wish, encourage them to decorate them any way they like.

CHORES FOR OUR CLASS

Chore	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Pick up toys and put them away	Hein	Tanesha	Tom	Suzanne	Keith
Wash countertop and sink		Jason			Felicia
Straighten supply cupboard		April		D.J.	
Water plants			Maria		
Feed fish	Su	Tyson	Lizzie	Thuong	Hannah

If you're in a classroom, allow children five to ten minutes at the beginning or the end of each day to record their experiences. If you wish, allow five minutes after lunch as well. If you're in a group or home setting, set aside time for reviewing the logs regularly. Explain to children that, over time, they'll be able to look back in their notebooks and see how they've become better at cooperating.

Variation: Younger children may prefer to draw scenes of cooperation, rather than writing about them. Set aside five to ten minutes each day to talk about what they've done to cooperate. Record their answers every day in a family, group, or class log, instead of individual ones, if you'd like.

Additional Group Activities

Cooperation Role Plays

Ask children to perform role plays about how they might cooperate in the following situations. Encourage them to think about how each person in the situation might *feel*. For each scenario, ask children: **Why do you think the person causing the problem acts this way? What might the person be feeling? How might knowing this change the way you react?**

- **A kid won't share the jump rope at school every day, even though other kids want their turn.**
- **You're supposed to plan a book report with three other kids, but two of them keep goofing off.**
- **You and your sister receive a new box of fluorescent markers to share—but you both want to keep them for yourself.**
- **Your music teacher puts you in the back row for choir, next to a boy who always talks. This means you won't be able to hear the teacher very well.**
- **Several of the kids at your place of worship giggle and shove each other around during activities. You can see that the adult leader doesn't like this.**

Peacemaking Team

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint) and fine-line markers
- Copies of "TALKS—5 Steps for Talking About a Problem" handout (leader's guide page 46)

A Peacemaking Team works with other children who need help cooperating. If you wish, this team can be made up of two to five children who are the Peacemakers for a week. Then a new team can form the next week (and so on), until each child has had a turn to be a Peacemaker. If you wish, make a poster with the words "This Week's Peacemakers Are . . ." at the top, and then fill in children's names. This way, if children are having a conflict, they can look at the poster to see the names of kids on the Peacemaking Team and go to one of them for help.

Set up a quiet corner of the room for a Peacemaking Center where problems can be taken to the Peacemaking Team. Explain that this is where the team members will talk about cooperation with the people who have a problem. If you wish, set up a certain time of day when the Peacemaking Center will be open. Be sure that it's a time when you, as the adult leader, will be able to step in to help the Peacemakers (if they ask you) by modeling how to handle the dispute.

Tell children: **As a Peacemaker, it's not your job to solve other people's problems *for* them. But you can help people calm down and talk to each other. And you can help them think of their own ways to solve a problem.** Give children copies of the TALKS handout or encourage them to brainstorm their own tips. Here are some tips you may want to share:

- Listen to all sides of the story. Remind the people involved to be fair to each other: no name-calling or mean words.

- To keep the facts straight, repeat what each person has said.
- Ask each person to think of a solution. Write the different ideas down. Allow the people involved to choose one solution to try.
- Thank everyone for cooperating, and then tell the teacher or adult leader what happened and how the problem was solved.
- If you can't help the people find a good solution or if they fight in the Peacemaking Center, ask for help from the teacher or the adult leader.

If you wish, allow children to practice peacemaking by role-playing the situations described on page 43; but this time, one role player can act as Peacemaker. Allow children to practice until they feel comfortable handling real-life conflicts.

Sing in the Jumble Chorus

Tell children that they'll be part of the Jumble Chorus. Ask each child in your class or group to tell the rest of the kids what her or his favorite song is. Then ask everyone to sing their favorite song out loud, at the same time, on the count of three. When they're finished, ask the group: **How did it feel to sing in the Jumble Chorus? Did the group sound good? Did it sound not-so-good? Why?**

Now ask: **How can we cooperate to make the Jumble Chorus sound better?** Next, suggest that the chorus choose only *one* song and sing it together at the count of three. When the song is finished, ask: **How did everyone sound this time? What happened when all of you cooperated? How did cooperation help?**

Explain to children: **This is an example of cooperating. What do you think will happen when we work together in other ways?**

Cooperation Day

Materials Needed

- Paper or posterboard
- Crayons, markers, and colored pencils
- *For Variation:* Chart paper (such as newsprint) and fine-line markers

Plan a Cooperation Day for your school or group. Together, decide when it will be, where it will take place, and who will be invited. Then create posters and invitations using the art supplies. Choose what you'll serve and who will bring each treat, and then pick the activities you'll do during Cooperation Day. Ideas may include making up skits, drawing murals or pictures, and writing poems and songs—all with a cooperation theme.

Variation: Create a set of Cooperation Day rules for all members of the class or group to follow. The rules may include:

1. Follow directions.
2. Avoid arguments.
3. Take turns.
4. Share.
5. Talk out problems.

Record the rules on chart paper and hang them where everyone will see them on Cooperation Day.

Cooperation Barometer

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Cooperation Barometer" handout (leader's guide page 48)
- Crayons, markers, and colored pencils
- Scissors
- Paper fasteners
- Glue sticks
- Lightweight cardboard

Explain to children that a barometer can predict the weather by showing changes in air pressure. A *cooperation* barometer can show how well the class or group members are getting along together by showing changes in people's moods. Give children copies of the "Cooperation Barometer" handout. Together, talk about the four types of "group weather."

Allow children to color the barometers and arrows any way they wish, and then have them glue the barometers onto a piece of cardboard. When they're finished, have them cut out their arrows and barometers. They can then attach the arrows to the centers of the barometer using paper fasteners. You can display one barometer on a bulletin board or on the wall. Explain that you'll use the barometer to keep track of the "weather" (mood) of the group. If you hear angry words, you'll move the arrows to "Cloudy," for example. The goal is to keep the barometers on "Sunny." If you wish, give children a treat or reward for a day or a week of "sunny weather."

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

The Parent's Handbook: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting by Don Dinkmeyer Sr., Gary D. McKay, and Don Dinkmeyer Jr. (Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, 1997). This book provides information about effective parenting techniques, including ways to develop cooperation, responsibility, and mutual respect between a parent and child. You'll also find information about family meetings—especially ways to make decisions and solve problems.

We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices by Lauren Murphy Payne, M.S.W., and Claudia Rohling, M.S.W. (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1997). This book for PreK–3 teaches essential cooperation and peacemaking skills in a way younger children can easily understand. A companion leader's guide is also available.

Working Together: Building Children's Social Skills Through Folk Literature by Gwendolyn Cartledge and James Kleefeld (Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, 1994). Children learn and practice 31 social skills through folk tales from diverse cultures, including cooperating, respecting property, accepting differences, winning and losing, mediating group rules, and negotiating conflict.

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR)
23 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-1764
www.esrnational.org

ESR is a leading source of innovative curriculum materials and teacher training programs that focus on issues of peacemaking and conflict resolution. The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), ESR's largest initiative, is a comprehensive, K–12 school-based program in conflict resolution and intergroup relations; it provides a model for preventing violence and creating caring learning communities. Ask for the "Adventures in Peacemaking" book, which is geared toward elementary-age kids.

TALKS—5 Steps for Talking About a Problem

Talk about what happened. Be honest. Explain why each of you did what you did. Were you tired? Angry? Grumpy?

Act and talk politely. Talk about the *problem,* not the *person.* Don't say something like, "I hate you for taking my pencil." Instead, say, "I don't like it when someone takes my pencil." Or, "I don't like it when my toys are missing."

Listen to the other person's side of the story. Think about how he or she might feel. Ask questions so you understand. Learning to listen takes lots of practice. Don't give up!

Keep trying to cooperate. Have an open mind. If one idea doesn't work, try another.

Share in finding a solution. Find an answer to your problem that both of you can agree on.

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CALM Down—4 Steps to Easing Angry Feelings

Calm yourself down. There are lots of ways to do this. You might take a deep breath, speak slowly, or soften your voice. Or you might take time out to do something else, rest, read, or jump up and down until you're tired. Try different things to see what works for you.

Admit that you have a problem. Look at what happened and what you said or did. "I yelled." "I said something mean." "I broke the light." Don't run away or ignore it. It's okay to make mistakes if you learn from them.

Learn to share your feelings with someone. Talk about angry or upset feelings with an adult you trust. You might talk to your mom or dad, your teacher, your club leader, or someone at your place of worship. Keep looking until you find someone who will listen and talk to you about how you feel. Have the person help you find ways to deal with angry feelings.

Make a change in how you deal with anger. Decide on something safe and healthy to do when you feel angry. It's not safe or healthy to throw things, holler at people, or hit or kick someone. What can you do instead? You could try jumping jacks. You could make funny faces at yourself in the mirror. You might want to write in a journal. Decide that next time you're angry and having a conflict, you'll count to ten backwards before you speak, think of something nice to say, or walk away until you feel better.

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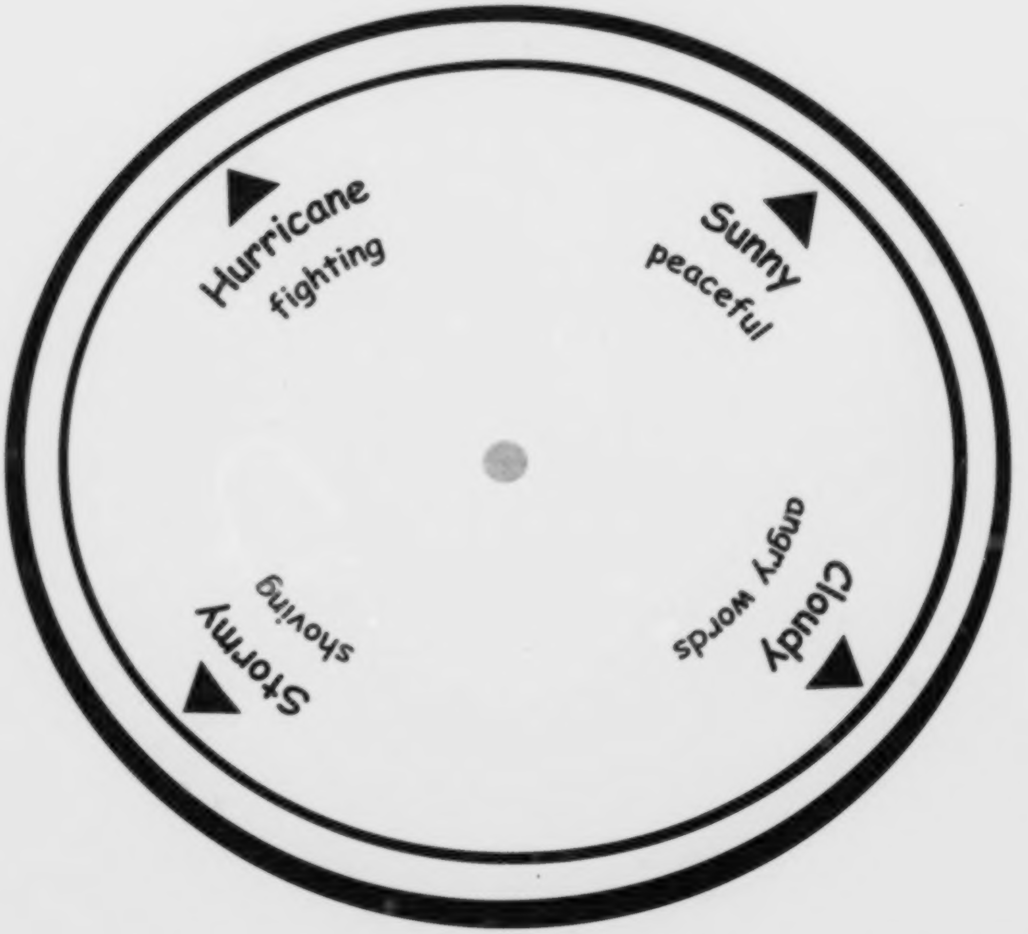
Cooperation Barometer

Use these pictures as a pattern for making your own Cooperation Barometer. Color them, cut them out, and fasten the arrow to the center of the barometer. Then use the arrow to show the "weather" of your class or group.


Hurricane
fighting
Sunny
peaceful
Cloudy
angry words
Stormy
shoving

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Lesson 5

FAIRNESS

In this lesson, children learn the meaning of fairness and explore three ways to treat others fairly: by sharing and taking turns, deciding not to be jealous, and respecting all people. The lesson also addresses how children can respond when they're treated unfairly.

Concepts

Sharing, taking turns, dealing with jealousy, unselfishness, respect for others, rights

Being Your Best Chapter

"Fairness" (pages 53–63)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- "4 Ways to Treat People Fairly" handout (leader's guide page 56)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 53–55 in *Being Your Best*. After reading, ask questions like:

- **What were some reasons Sonja thought the war wasn't fair? Can you think of other reasons?**
- **How did Sonja comfort her little brother when he cried and said, "It's not fair!" Do you think that was a good thing for her to say? Why or why not? What would you have said?**
- **What did Sonja decide to do to make the unfairness in her life better? How will this help her? How will this help others around her?**

Fairness—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 56–57 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What does *fairness* mean? What *doesn't* it mean?**
- **What happens when you're fair? Why should you be fair to others, even if they aren't always fair to you?**
- **What are some things that aren't fair? Is it possible for people to fix things that don't seem fair? Why or why not? Is trying to fix something that seems unfair easy or hard to do? Why?**
- **Why is it important to be fair? What would happen if no one tried to be fair?**

How Can You Be Fair?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 57–60 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **How can sharing and taking turns make things more fair? What are some ways you can share? When can you be fair by taking turns?**
- **How can deciding not to be jealous make things more fair for everyone? How can it help you be happier? What are some ways you can change jealous feelings?**
- **In what ways are people different from each other? How can you show *respect* for someone who's different from you? How can it help *you* to show respect and fairness toward someone who isn't like you?**
- **How can you handle a situation that isn't fair? Have you ever tried some of these ways? If so, what happened?**

Distribute the "4 Ways to Treat People Fairly" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day,

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such as inside the top of their desk or on their closet door at home.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* pages 60–61)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has three "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Fairness" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show fairness? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **You're out at recess playing softball. Recess is only fifteen minutes long. Your team is up first and scores three runs. When the other team gets a turn at bat, the first player hits a home run, and then the bell rings and everyone has to go back to class. Who won the game? What's fair to both teams in this situation?**
- **You and your older sister both ask for dirt bikes for Christmas. When the big day arrives, only your older sister gets a bike. You get some in-line skates instead. Is this fair? Why or why not? Would you feel jealous? What could you do with the jealous feelings? Why do you think your sister got the bike when you didn't? If the situation seems unfair to you, what could you do about it?**

Activities in the Children's Book

Make a Fairness Pocket Card

(*Being Your Best* page 61)

Materials Needed

- File cards
- Fine-line markers (or markers in a variety of colors, if you wish)

Ask children: **What are some ways people aren't fair to each other?** After you've received several examples, ask them: **What can you do when someone is being unfair?** Brainstorm examples, reminding children about the ideas in the bulleted list on pages 59–60 of *Being Your Best*.

When your list is complete, have children write their favorite ideas on their pocket cards. Allow them to decorate their cards any way they wish. After everyone has finished, tell children: **Be sure to keep the card someplace handy, maybe in your pocket or backpack. When someone isn't fair to you, you can look at your card to find an idea that can help you handle the situation.**

Variation: Have children draw pictures that show themselves being fair. Encourage them to think of things they've done recently, including sharing, taking turns, deciding not to be jealous, or showing respect for others. These acts of fairness may have happened in their family, their class or group, or their neighborhood. Encourage children to draw the scenes and explain them to the group afterward.

Make Family Chores Fair

(*Being Your Best* pages 61–62)

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint)
- Markers

Ask children: **What are some of the chores you do in your family? What are some chores that other family members have to do?** After several chores have been suggested, help children consider the fairness of these duties by asking questions such as: **Do some people in your family do more chores than others? Are there any chores some people are too young to do? Which chores are easy? Which ones are hard?** List all of these chores on chart paper.

Together with children, brainstorm ways these family chores could be divided more fairly. Consider giving each chore points, such as 1 for a very easy chore, 2 for a medium-sized one, and 3 for a very big one. As a group, decide how many points each chore should get, and then write that number beside the chore.

Next, suggest that each family member must collect a certain number of chore points every day (or week). For example, if children's points have to add up to 6 in one week, they could be given six easy chores (1 point each) or two big ones (3 points each). As a group, decide how many points each family member should be given. Younger family members could be assigned fewer points in a week, while older and more capable family members could be assigned more. The question is, "Is each person doing a fair amount of work?"

Variation: Use the "chore points" idea in your class or group to divide up jobs the same way.

Start a Fairness Jar

(*Being Your Best* page 62)

Materials Needed

- Large, clean jar, coffee can, or box with lid
- Label
- Marker
- Paper
- Scissors
- *Optional:* Copies of "Telling or Tattling?" handout (leader's guide page 32)

CHORES FOR OUR FAMILY

Jobs to be done	How many points	Do how often
Make beds	1	Every day
Feed the cat	1	Twice a day
Take out trash	1	Twice a week
Put out recycling	1	Once a week
Walk the dog	2	Twice a day
Wash the dishes	2	Once a day
Wash clothes	2	Twice a week
Fold and put away clothes	2	Twice a week
Vacuum	3	Once a week
Clean the bathroom	3	Once a week

Grandma: 8 points per week
Uniqua: 6 points per week
Dad: 8 points per week
Marcus: 6 points per week

Label your chosen container (*example:* "Fairness Jar") and place it where everyone can reach it. Have children cut up slips of paper to set beside it. Tell children: **Sometimes things happen to us that seem unfair. Can you think of any unfair things that have happened to you?** After hearing several responses, explain: **When something seems unfair, write a note about what happened and place it in this container.** You might wish to add: **You don't have to write people's names. Just describe what happened. We're not trying to get people in trouble—we're trying to find solutions to problems.** You may want to use the "Telling or Tattling?" handout to help children understand the difference between tattling and reporting a problem about unfair treatment.

Every week, have "Fairness Day." In your class or group, read the notes and discuss solutions to the problems. Ask children questions such as: **Could this problem have been solved by sharing or taking turns? Is this a problem that could be ignored? Were jealous feelings involved? How might people talk about this problem and still show respect for each other?**

Make Games More Fair

(*Being Your Best* pages 62–63)

Materials Needed

- Favorite board games or card games
- Paper and pens or pencils

Use board or card games you have available in your home, meeting place, or classroom. If you have a larger group, ask children to bring some of their own favorite games. Choose one game for everyone to play together, or divide children into smaller groups and let each group choose a game. Ask children: **Have you ever played a game where you felt the rules were unfair? Does someone always have to win or lose? Why or why not?** Tell children that they can rewrite the rules to their favorite game, any way they want to. Encourage them to work together with the others in their group to come up with new rules that are more fair. If you wish, say: **The rules don't even have to make sense. It's more important to be fair and make sure that everyone has fun.** Encourage children to write down their new sets of rules and include them with the game.

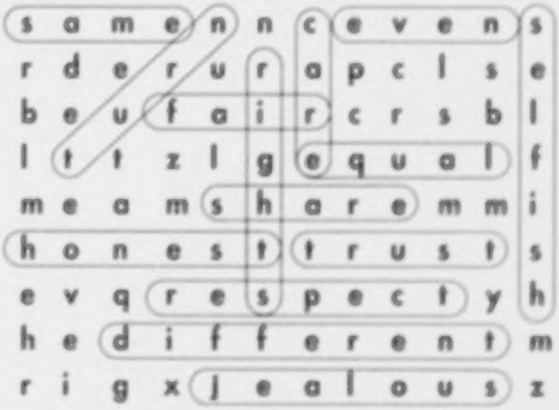
Additional Group Activities

Search for Words About Fairness

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Fairness Word Search" handout (leader's guide page 57)
- *For Variation:* Paper, pens or pencils, scissors, graph paper

Hand out copies of the word search to children, explaining that they are to look for and circle the fairness words listed. The words are hidden in the puzzle, and they may run up and down, across, or diagonally. If you wish, discuss the meanings of the words first. Here is the key:



s	a	m	e	n	n	c	e	v	e	n	s
r	d	e	r	u	r	a	p	c	l	s	e
b	e	u	f	a	i	r	c	r	s	b	l
l	t	t	z	l	g	e	q	u	a	l	f
m	e	a	m	s	h	a	r	e	m	m	i
h	o	n	e	s	t	t	r	u	s	t	s
e	v	q	r	e	s	p	e	c	t	y	h
h	e	d	i	f	f	e	r	e	n	t	m
r	i	g	x	j	e	a	l	o	u	s	z

Variation: Have older children create their own word searches. First, ask them to brainstorm a list of words that have to do with fairness. (They may want to review the "Fairness" chapter in *Being Your Best* for ideas.) Next, tell children to write each word on a strip of paper just big enough for the word. Arrange each strip so that matching letters overlap. When all of the strips are laid out, have the children copy the diagram on graph paper and fill in the extra spaces with random letters.

"Respecting Differences" Interview

Materials Needed

- Copies of "'Respecting Differences' Interview" handout (leader's guide page 58)
- Pencils or pens

Tell children to find someone in the class or group who they don't know very well. Once they've found someone, say: **Now you're going to interview each other. Ask your partner the questions on your interview sheet, and then write down the answers. If there's time, think of your own questions to ask and write those on the back of your handout, along with the person's answers. Then it's your partner's turn to ask you questions and get the answers.** When the interviews are finished, ask each child to introduce his or her new friend to everyone else, using the information from the handout.

Variation: Have children do this activity outside of your school or group—for example, in their neighborhood, place of worship, or community. Remind them that getting to know people who are new to them or different from them helps encourage respect for others—and respect leads people to treat each other fairly. (To explain the meaning of *respect*, see pages 109–114 and page 155 in *Being Your Best*.) Ask children to bring in their completed interviews and describe their new friend to the group.

The "Different but Equal" Game

Materials Needed

- Chalkboard and chalk, or paper and a pencil

Ask children: **In what ways can people be different? In what ways can they be alike?** Allow children to brainstorm a number of comparisons. Write their answers down on the chalkboard or on a piece of paper. Encourage them to include broad categories that describe many people (human being, boy or girl, adult or child, and so forth), as well as narrower categories (eye color, birthday month, favorite book, name). Once you have a number of suggestions, ask children to form groups according to each category. Call out, for example: **If you're a boy, form a group over here. If you're a girl who was born in July, stand over here.**

After children have had several chances to form different groups, say: **Did you notice that sometimes you were in the biggest group? People are alike in many ways.** Name some ways this is true (we're all human beings, we're either girls or boys, and so on). Then ask: **Were you ever in a group by yourself? People are all different from each other in some way.** Point out groups in which this was true: most of us don't have the same names, for example; many of us like to read different books. Ask children: **Is it better to all be alike or to all be different? What would happen if we were all alike? Why is it important to treat everybody's differences with respect? How do you feel when you aren't given respect?** Point out that people who are different from you aren't "better" or "worse" than you—they're different but equal.

Jelly Bean Game

Materials Needed

- Bag of jelly beans

Show children the bag of jelly beans and tell them you're going to share them. As you pass out the jelly beans one by one, always give an extra jelly bean to a certain person. Watch how the other children react. Do they notice? See if anyone says, "Hey, that's not fair!" Ignore these words. Keep passing out jelly beans in this way until the bag is empty. All but one child will have the same number of jelly beans; the one child will have more.

When you're finished, ask the group: **How did you feel when one person kept getting more?** Ask how the child who got the extra jelly beans felt, too. Talk with children about how it feels to be treated unfairly. Make sure children understand that you randomly chose the person who was to receive extra jelly beans.

Discussion of Children's Rights

Materials Needed

- Newspaper or magazine articles, or Web site information on children's rights issues

If you think it's appropriate for the children in your family, class, or group, discuss the ways in which kids in different parts of the world are treated unfairly or how they experience some form of suffering (war, hunger, injustice). Select a current situation involving issues such as child labor, child abuse, lack of health care, or poverty, for example. Based on the topic you've chosen, ask children questions such as:

- **Is it fair that children around the world have to deal with this situation?**
- **How do you feel to know that this can happen to someone close to your own age?**
- **Who's responsible for what's going on, and why?**
- **Is there anything we can do right here to help?**

If possible, take the discussion a step further by encouraging children to get in touch with organizations like Save the Children or the Children's Defense Fund (see leader's guide "Resources" on page 55) to get more information on how to help. You may even wish to contact these organizations as a group.

Fairness Chain

Materials Needed

- Several identical cookie cutters in the shape of large gingerbread figures
- Construction paper
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Tape or glue

Remind children: **We've learned that we're all very different in many ways. But we've also learned that, even though we're different, we're equal.** Then read the following poem aloud:

> **Dare to be fair**
> **With yourself and others,**
> **For all of us**
> **Are sisters and brothers.**

Discuss the idea of what it means to be "sisters and brothers" with people who aren't in your family. Ask children how they think this relates to the idea of fairness. Then have each child trace a gingerbread figure onto a piece of construction paper. You can point out that, right now, everyone's figures look almost exactly alike. Then encourage children to draw their own features and clothing on the traced figure. Afterward, have children cut out their figures. Display all of them hand-in-hand in a "chain" around the class or meeting room (or on a bulletin board). If you wish, write out the poem and hang it with the figures.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A Child's Book About Understanding and Celebrating Each Other by Cindy Gainer (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1998). Warm, simple words explore how we are alike and different. This book helps children in preschool through grade three to discover, accept, and affirm individual differences and tolerance for them. A leader's guide is available.

Children's Defense Fund
25 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 628-8787
www.childrensdefense.org

The Children's Defense Fund is a voice for children's rights in America. The organization works for better health care, a better start in life for kids, and much more. At the Web site, you'll find links to dozens of other sites.

Save the Children
54 Wilton Road
Westport, CT 06881
1-800-243-5075
www.savethechildren.org

Save the Children is an organization that works for children's rights around the world. The Web site offers links to other sites, stories, ways to sponsor kids, statistics, and information about organizations that have a similar mission.

4 Ways to Treat People Fairly

Find ways to share, take turns, and feel less jealous.

Ask people what you can do to help make things more fair.

Include others in games and activities. Don't leave people out.

Respect people who are different from you.

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Fairness Word Search

How many fairness words can you find? Search for fairness words given in the list below.

s	a	m	e	n	n	c	e	v	e	n	s
r	d	e	r	u	r	a	p	c	l	s	e
b	e	u	f	a	i	r	c	r	s	b	l
l	t	t	z	l	g	e	q	u	a	l	f
m	e	a	m	s	h	a	r	e	m	m	i
h	o	n	e	s	t	t	r	u	s	t	s
e	v	q	r	e	s	p	e	c	t	y	h
h	e	d	i	f	f	e	r	e	n	t	m
r	i	g	x	j	e	a	l	o	u	s	z

Fairness Word List

same
share
respect
rights

even
honest
different
care

fair
trust
jealous
selfish

equal
turn

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"Respecting Differences" Interview

Use this form to interview someone in your class, group, or community.

Person's name: ____________________

Person's age: ____________________

Three ways my new friend is like me: ____________________

____

____

____

Three ways my new friend is different from me: ____________________

____

____

____

My new friend is sad when: ____________________

____

My new friend is happy when: ____________________

____

My new friend's favorite thing to do is: ____________________

____

One new thing my friend could teach me is: ____________________

____

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Lesson 6

FORGIVENESS

This lesson helps children explore four steps of forgiveness: talking to the person who hurt you, talking to an adult about what happened, letting go of anger, and forgiving the person. The lesson also addresses how children can forgive themselves.

Concepts

Apologizing, dealing with anger, empathy, truthfulness, being forgiven, self-acceptance

Being Your Best Chapter

"Forgiveness" (pages 64–76)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "When You're Sorry—5 Ways to Forgive Yourself" handout (leader's guide page 65)
- Copies of "7 Ways to Be Forgiving" handout (leader's guide page 66)
- *Optional:* Copies of "Telling or Tattling?" handout (leader's guide page 32); copies of "TALKS—5 Steps for Talking About a Problem" and "CALM Down—4 Steps to Easing Angry Feelings" handouts (leader's guide pages 46 and 47)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 64–66 in *Being Your Best.* After reading, ask questions like:

- **What things happened in Ché's life that hurt him or made him feel angry?**
- **Why do you think the kids at school made fun of Ché?**
- **Did the teacher show respect for Ché when she said the Indians killed all the buffalo? How did Ché feel when she said this?**
- **In what ways did Ché control his anger?**
- **How did Ché forgive others? What did he do?**

Forgiveness—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 66–68 in *Being Your Best.* Ask children:

- **Why do you think the kids were unkind to Maria? In what ways is Maria's story similar to Ché's?**
- **What do you think Maria's mother meant when she said, "Remember that without the rocks, the stream would lose its song"?**
- **What does *forgiveness* mean? What do you do when you *forgive* someone? Is it something you do with words only?**
- **How did Maria show she had forgiven Crystal? What happened then? How did Maria feel after forgiving Crystal?**
- **How can forgiving someone help you feel better? Does it change the way you look at the person—and at yourself? How? Is forgiving easy or hard to do?**

How Can You Be Forgiving?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 68–72 in *Being Your Best.* Ask children:

- **What are some things you can do to help yourself forgive?**

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- **What kinds of things should you report to a trusted adult? How could the adult help you make things right again?**
- **Why does letting go of your anger help? What might happen if you keep your anger bottled up? How can you let your anger go without hurting anyone?**
- **How can it help to talk to the person who hurt you? What might you say?**

If you wish, use the "Telling or Tattling?" handout to help children decide what kinds of things to report to an adult and what not to report. You can also use the "TALKS" and "CALM" handouts for guidelines on working out disagreements and handling anger.

- **How can you show someone you've forgiven him or her?**
- **When might you need to forgive yourself? Why is it important?**

Give children copies of the "When You're Sorry—5 Ways to Forgive Yourself" handout and go over it together. Ask:

- **What are some ways you can forgive yourself?**

Distribute the "7 Ways to Be Forgiving" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on their closet door at home.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* pages 72–73)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has three "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Forgiveness" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show forgiveness? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **Your teacher steps out of the room while your class works on a math assignment. As soon as he leaves, a few students throw around wads of paper and mess up the room. When your teacher returns and asks who did it, no one answers. He punishes the whole class by not allowing anyone to go on a field trip. You don't think this is fair, and you feel angry. But if you tell the teacher the names of the students who caused problems, they might be angry with you. What should you do? What can you do with your angry feelings? How can you help yourself feel better about what the teacher did? Can you forgive the students who messed up the room and ruined the field trip? How?**
- **Your little sister begs you to let her ride your bike. You know she's too little, but you let her anyway. She loses control and runs into your dad's parked car, denting the car door and the handlebars of your bike. Your dad is angry and blames you. He**

says he won't fix your bike because you should have been more responsible. He also says you have to do extra chores to earn money to help pay for the dented door. You're upset, and you think this is all unfair. How can you forgive your dad? Your sister? Yourself? How can you help your dad understand how you feel? Can you be both responsible and forgiving?

Activities in the Children's Book

Unscramble an Important Idea

(*Being Your Best* page 74)

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint) and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
- Paper and pens or pencils

Together with children, look at the scrambled sentence on page 74 of *Being Your Best*. As a group, try to unscramble it. Talk about what the sentence means, asking questions such as: **How can forgiveness lead to peace at home? In school? With a friend?**

Then tell children: **There are many words in this chapter that go with the idea of forgiveness. Can you find some?** Allow children to search for forgiveness words and brainstorm some of their own. Words or phrases might include *anger, let go, talk, truth, admit, peace, sorry*. List them on chart paper or on the chalkboard. Tell children they can scramble these words and phrases to make puzzles for each other. Have children work individually or in small groups to make these "scrambles." (Remind them to write the actual words and phrases, so they don't forget what they are unscrambled!) Let them present their scrambles for the rest of the kids to figure out.

SHYNOTE PLESH SU EB FRIVIGGON.
ELT'S KLAT ETTEROGH.

HONESTY HELPS US BE FORGIVING.
LET'S TALK TOGETHER.

Variation: Ask children to write longer forgiveness sentences and scramble those for the group instead. After the group solves each message, discuss its meaning. Examples might include: "Telling the truth lets everyone know what happened" or "Yank out bad feelings like weeds."

Start a "Here's What I Can Do" List

(*Being Your Best* pages 74–75)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Here's What I Can Do" handout (leader's guide page 67)
- Pencils or pens

Give children copies of the "Here's What I Can Do" handout. Ask them to list the things they get angry about on the left-hand side of the page, and positive things they can do to handle the anger on the right-hand side. Explain that they can finish the sentences started under "I get angry when," or they can write their own.

After they've finished, find volunteers to share a few examples. Ask the group: **What are some other ideas for handling anger? What would not help solve the situation?** If you wish, have the children role-play handling anger in positive ways.

Variation: Suggest school-related sentence starters instead, such as "I get angry when a classmate ________," "I get mad when my teacher ________," or "I get upset at recess when ________." Or make the starters specific to situations in your club, scout group, or faith community.

Find Words of Forgiveness

(*Being Your Best* page 75)

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint) and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
- Copies of "Forgiving Words" handout (leader's guide page 68)

Together with children, brainstorm words they can use to show forgiveness. (Some may be words they thought of in the preceding "Unscramble an Important Idea" activity.) List the words on chart paper or the chalkboard. Ask children: **Can you think of ways to turn these words into sentences that show forgiveness?** Hand out copies of "Forgiving Words." Ask children to write sentences for each situation. You can use the sentences on page 75 of *Being Your Best* as examples. Here are some others:

Words for talking about what happened:

- "That really hurt me."
- "I feel awful when someone talks about me behind my back. Will you promise not to do that anymore?"

Words for forgiving someone else:

- "I know you feel bad. Let's forget about it."
- "I forgive you."
- "I've made mistakes like that before."

Words for saying you're sorry:

- "I'm so sorry."
- "I didn't mean to hurt you."
- "I'll try not to do it again."
- "Let me help you fix it."

Words for forgiving yourself:

- "Everyone makes mistakes."
- "Nobody's perfect."
- "I learned an important lesson."

When children are finished, ask them to share some of their sentences with the group. If you wish, have children role-play situations in which the forgiving words might be used.

Draw What Happens

(*Being Your Best* page 75)

Materials Needed

- Drawing paper
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers

Ask children: **What might happen when we show someone forgiveness? What do you think a forgiving action might look like?** Encourage them to consider all of the steps of forgiving: talking to the person who hurt you, talking to an adult, letting go of anger in a positive way, forgiving the person, and forgiving yourself. Then invite children to draw pictures that show themselves being forgiving. When they've finished, ask them to share their pictures with the group and explain their forgiving action.

Additional Group Activities

Forgiveness Role Plays

Suggest that children role-play how to respond when someone does something mean. Encourage them to choose actions that allow them to stick up for themselves. For each situation, ask them to act out healthy ways to deal with angry feelings first. Then have them show ways to let the person know how they feel. Finally, have them find a way to forgive the person who hurt them. Tell children: **Remember that the person who hurt you has feelings, too. Try to think of the other person's feelings when you choose a forgiving action. Maybe that person didn't even know that you felt hurt.**

Examples:

- Someone accidentally knocks your lunch tray on the floor.
- A teacher tells you that your homework looks messy.
- Your aunt ruins your favorite shirt in the washing machine.
- Your sister tears your favorite book.
- The boy behind you steals supplies from your desk.
- Someone hits your best friend on the playground.

- The same girl always cuts ahead of you in line at school.

Visit from a Medical Professional

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint) and markers, or chalkboard and chalk

Arrange to have a medical professional talk to your group about what happens to people when they don't express their anger and stress. (Consider asking a school nurse, school psychologist, family physician, or representative from your county's health office to pay a visit, or contact a doctor, physician's assistant, or nurse in your neighborhood or faith community.)

Before the visit, explain to children: ***Stress* and *anger* can hurt your health. When you worry or keep anger inside and don't forgive others, you can become sick.** Tell children that a visitor will talk to them about stress. Draw a gingerbread figure on a piece of chart paper or a chalkboard.

During the talk, have the health professional write on the gingerbread figure what stress-related problems can happen to you and where. (For example, write *headache* on the head, *pounding heart* on the chest, and so on.)

The "Let It Go" Game

Materials Needed

- Balloons

Blow up a balloon to toss around the classroom or meeting room. Before you toss the balloon, say: **We can let angry feelings float away like a balloon.** Tell children that you're going to talk about a time when you got angry, and then let go of the anger as you toss the balloon to someone else. For example, say: **I got mad because someone called me stupid, but I'm going to let it go.** Then toss the balloon to a child, saying: **Now it's your turn. Name a time when you felt angry, and then let the feeling go as you toss the balloon to someone else.** Continue until every child has had a turn. (Remind children not to say the name of anyone in the group when talking about an angry time. Instead, they can say *someone* or *a person* when describing what happened.)

If you wish, teach children this rhyme as you play:

Forgive those who hurt you,
Forgive yourself, too.
Just like the winds blow,
Breathe deep and let go.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

Don't Rant and Rave on Wednesdays! The Children's Anger-Control Book by Adolph Moser, Ed.D. (Kansas City, MO: Landmark Editions, 1994). Anger can be a powerful and frightening emotion for children to see in others and to experience themselves. This book for ages 6–9 explains the causes of anger and offers methods that can help children reduce the amount of anger they feel.

Stress Can Really Get on Your Nerves! by Trevor Romain and Elizabeth Verdick (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2000). This fact-filled but funny book explains the causes of stress and how to handle it. Kids can take a Stress Test, learn about good and bad stress relievers, discover how to become their own Panic Mechanic, and find positive ways to express feelings.

Character Education Partnership
1600 K Street NW, Suite 501
Washington, DC 20006
1-800-988-8081
www.character.org

The Character Education Partnership is a nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to the idea that character and education are natural partners in helping children become responsible adults through teaching core values such as forgiveness, respect, responsibility, honesty, and others.

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When You're Sorry—5 Ways to Forgive Yourself

Say you're sorry.

Offer your friendship.

Repair what you did, if you can.

Resist doing it again. This can be hard, but keep trying.

Yank out your bad feelings like weeds, so there's room in your heart to forgive yourself.

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7 Ways to Be Forgiving

Face what happened. Let your feelings out. Cry. Kick a can. Write or draw about it.

Open up your heart and give the person who has hurt you a chance to explain. It's possible she or he didn't mean to hurt you.

Report what happened. Tell the person who hurt you how you feel.

Get help from a trusted adult.

Imagine how the other person might feel.

Value the other person. Try to see what is good in the other person. Then do something nice for him or her, if you can. This is the hardest part, but it will make you stronger.

Erase what happened from your mind. Forget it. Only remember what you learned.

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Here's What I Can Do

When do you get angry? What can you do about it?

I get angry when:	**Here's what I can do to express my anger and let it go:**
I get angry at my parents when ______ ______ ______	______ ______ ______ ______
I get angry at a friend when ______ ______ ______	______ ______ ______ ______
I get angry at my brother or sister when ______ ______ ______	______ ______ ______ ______
I get angry at school when ______ ______ ______	______ ______ ______ ______
I get angry at other times when ______ ______ ______	______ ______ ______ ______

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Forgiving Words

Use this form to help you brainstorm words you can use to say you're sorry and forgive.

Words for talking about what happened:

Example: "I don't like to be made fun of."

____

____

____

Words for forgiving someone else:

Example: "I know you're sorry."

____

____

____

Words for saying you'd like to be forgiven:

Example: "I really am sorry, and I hope you can forgive me."

____

____

____

Words for forgiving yourself:

Example: "I've learned from my mistake."

____

____

____

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Lesson 7
HONESTY

In this lesson, children come to understand three aspects of honesty: being truthful, genuine, and trustworthy.

Concepts

Truthfulness, being genuine, trustworthiness

Being Your Best Chapter

"Honesty" (pages 77–89)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "6 Ways to Be an Honest Person" handout (leader's guide page 76)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 77–79 in *Being Your Best*. After reading, ask questions like:

- **What did Claudia do that wasn't honest? How did she feel afterward?**
- **What did Claudia do that *was* honest? How did she feel about that?**
- **Did Claudia do the right thing when she told her teacher about the apricots? Why or why not?**
- **Do you think it was hard for Claudia to be honest? Why or why not? What happened to her when she told the truth?**
- **How did being honest and truthful help Claudia? Did it help the other students? How? What did Claudia learn about telling the truth?**

Honesty—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 79–81 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What does it mean to be *honest?***
- **What do you think Pat's father meant when he told her, "I'm not sure it's worth it to sell your honesty for a nickel"? Do you agree or disagree? Why?**
- **What might have happened to the author if she had kept the $1,500 in cash? What might have happened to the bank teller?**
- **Do you think it's more important to be honest with $1,500 than with a nickel or a dime? Why or why not?**

How Can You Be Honest?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 81–84 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What does it mean to be *truthful?***
- **Why do you think people lie?**
- **Are small lies better than big ones? Why or why not? Are all lies equally wrong? Why or why not?**
- **Who is most hurt by a lie? Why?**
- **What does it mean to be *genuine?* What are some ways you can show others that you are who you say you are?**
- **Are there times when not saying anything is like telling a lie? Why or why not?**
- **What does it mean to be *trustworthy?* How is being trustworthy like being honest? How is it different from being honest?**
- **What good things can happen when you're truthful, genuine, and trustworthy? Do you sometimes get in trouble when you tell the truth? Is it still better to tell the truth? Why or why not?**

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Distribute the "6 Ways to Be an Honest Person" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on their closet door at home.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* page 85)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has three "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Honesty" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show honesty? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead the children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **Your best friend tells you that he cheated on a test. He says you must keep it a secret, so you promise you will. But later, your teacher asks if anyone cheated. What do you say? Do you stay loyal to your friend and keep his secret? Or do you tell the truth? Is it more important to be *loyal* or *truthful?* Is there any way you can be both loyal *and* truthful? What might you say to your teacher?**
- **You go back to your classroom at lunch time, and you're alone. You accidentally knock over a large jar of orange paint onto the countertop. The paint runs across your classmates' art projects, all over the countertop, and onto the floor. You're scared. You think that if you leave now and don't tell anyone what happened, no one will ever know who caused the mess. The art projects are ruined, and the countertop and the floor might always be stained. You know that telling the truth can't change that. Should you tell the truth anyway? What might happen if you do? What might happen if you don't?**

Activities in the Children's Book

Talk About "Living a Lie"

(*Being Your Best* page 86)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "6 Good Reasons to Tell the Truth" handout (leader's guide page 77)

Give children copies of the "6 Good Reasons to Tell the Truth" handout and go over it together. Encourage them to hold a family meeting to talk about what it means to live a lie. (On pages 37–38 in *Being Your Best*, family meetings are introduced.) Suggest that children brainstorm examples of *how* people might live a lie, and then think of reasons *why* people might behave this way. Encourage children to use the handout to help them talk about this topic. Suggest that children ask every family member to share an example of a time when they pretended to be something they're not. (An option is to have each family member make up a lie and imagine what would happen if she or he tried to keep the lie going.)

Variation: Hold a discussion about honesty in your class or group, using the handout as a guide. Ask: **How can telling the truth help other people? How can it help *you?* What will other people think of you if you tell the truth? How will it make you feel?** Together, talk about the idea of living a lie. Have children make up a lie and brainstorm what might happen if they tried to keep the lie going. Ask volunteers to role-play the situation, if you wish.

Watch TV Commercials

(*Being Your Best* pages 86–87)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Honesty Test for TV Commercials" handout (leader's guide page 78)
- Pens or pencils
- *For Variation:* A videotape of several appropriate television commercials; a TV and VCR

Give children copies of the "Honesty Test for TV Commercials" handout. Say: **Sometimes TV commercials use dishonesty to sell products, saying things that may not be true about what the products can do. They might exaggerate, or stretch the truth, to make the products seem better than they really are.** Suggest that children watch a TV commercial carefully, with a parent or another adult at home. Explain that they can use the "Honesty Test" to find dishonesty in the following ways:

- **Listen for "extreme" words like *greatest, best, always, never,* and others listed on the handout. For example, notice when the announcer says, "This is the *best* car on the road today," or, "This soap gets your clothes the *cleanest.*" Remember that when advertisers say these things, they aren't always telling the whole truth.**
- **Ask yourself if the commercial proves what it says to be true. Did an expert test the product? If so, do you trust the expert to tell the truth? Why or why not?**
- **Notice any warnings in the commercial. Suppose you know that a toy being advertised has small parts that a child could choke on—does the commercial let buyers know? What about commercials for medicine—do they warn of any health problems that might occur if you use the medication?**

Have children rate the commercial for honesty. Encourage them to ask what parents or other adults think, too. If you wish, have children bring their completed tests to the class or group to explain what they learned.

Variation: Videotape several television commercials and play them for children. Allow them to vote for the one they'd like to analyze as a group, using the "Honesty Test" handout. Another alternative is to evaluate print ads, Web site ads, radio commercials, or movie previews.

Read Fables About Honesty

(*Being Your Best* page 87)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Learn from Fables" handout (leader's guide page 79)
- Fables about honesty to read aloud (see leader's guide "Resources" on page 75)
- Pens or pencils

Give children copies of the "Learn from Fables" handout. Explain to your class or group: **Fables are stories that have been told to children for a very long time, usually to teach a lesson. Fables often give examples of good character traits, such as honesty.** Read some fables aloud and use the handout to discuss them. If you wish, have children divide into partners or small groups; have each pair or group read a fable and talk about what they read. You can use this activity to teach about other character traits (fairness, cooperation, respect) as well.

Variation: Suggest that children have a "Fable Night" once a week at home. Each week, a different family member can choose a fable to read aloud, as a lead-in to a discussion of the character trait the story explores.

Read About Honest People in Real Life

(*Being Your Best* pages 87–88)

Materials Needed

- Books, stories, or articles about honest people
- Dress-up clothes or props
- Drawing paper or blank transparency sheets
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers (including markers for transparency sheets)
- Paper and pens or pencils
- Overhead projector (if using transparency sheets)

Using the books or articles you've collected, have children choose a famous honest person they admire. Each child can pick his or her own person to learn more about, or the children can work in small groups. Encourage them to read about the person they chose and tell the rest of the group about the person in one of the following ways:

- Dress up like the person whose story they're telling.
- Write a poem about the person.
- Act out a scene from the person's life.
- Draw a picture on paper or on an overhead transparency showing an "honesty" scene from the person's life.
- Read about a famous honest person and a famous *dis*honest person. Compare the actions of the two people.

While exploring honesty, encourage children to focus on whether the person was truthful, genuine, or trustworthy. Did the person have to make a difficult choice?

Write Your Own Fable

(*Being Your Best* page 88)

Materials Needed

- Fables about honesty to read aloud (see leader's guide "Resources" on page 75)
- Paper and pens or pencils

Introduce this activity by reading an honesty fable aloud to the group. Encourage children to model their own fable after one they've already heard or read. Or brainstorm ways a fable they know could be rewritten to make a new fable. Say to your class or group: **When you make up characters for your fable, think of different ways that they can show honesty. How would you write about a character who's *truthful*? What might a character who's *genuine* act like? What might a *trustworthy* character do?** If you wish, have children work in pairs. When they're finished writing, ask them to read their fables aloud.

Variations: With younger children, write a fable as a group.

With older children, start several fables at the same time by having each child begin one. Or, if you wish, have children work in smaller groups, each group writing their own fable. Say: **The first part should be a sentence or two telling who the fable is about—a girl, a boy, a dog, or whoever you wish. Tell what the character looks like or acts like.** When children have finished the first part, have them pass the paper to the person who's sitting beside them. Next, say: **Now tell about the place the character is in—the *setting* where the story happens.** When this part is finished, have children pass the paper again. Here's an example of how to start a group fable and continue each part:

First part, tells who the fable is about:
Juan was a boy who was new at school. He wanted the kids to like him.

Second part, tells where the fable takes place:
On his first day, Juan was on the playground at recess.

Third part, tells who else is in the fable:
Lots of kids from Juan's class were on the

playground, too. One of them, named Matt, was kind and friendly and was the sort of person other kids looked up to.

Fourth part, tells what happens that forces the main character to make a choice about being honest:
Juan thought he would have more friends if he told them he had a computer, even though he really didn't.

Fifth part, tells the choice the character makes:
Juan started to tell the other kids that he had a computer. They asked to come over and see it. Then Juan had to tell the kids the truth. Some of the kids got mad at Juan for lying. But Matt said, "I understand why you lied, but it wasn't a nice thing to do." He invited Juan to come play on his computer.

Sixth part, tells the moral of the story:
The moral of the story is: You don't make friends by lying.

It can also be fun to try humorous fables. Ask children to fold over their paper before passing it to the next person; that way, the person who continues the fable won't know what's already happened in the story.

Additional Group Activities

Make a Book About Honesty

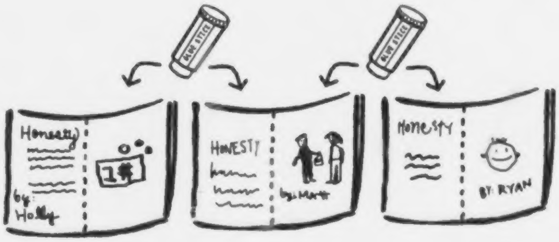
Materials Needed

- 8½ x 11-inch plain, heavyweight paper—one sheet per child
- Pens or pencils
- Colored pencils, crayons, markers, or paints
- 9½ x 12-inch piece of posterboard or stiff paper for the book cover
- Glue (preferably a glue stick; liquid glue will cause the pages to wrinkle as they dry)
- *Optional:* Wallpaper or cloth to cover the posterboard
- *For Variation:* Spiral binder, paper fasteners, staples, or a needle and thread

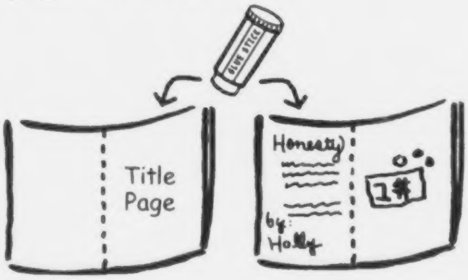
Give each child a sheet of paper. Ask everyone to fold their sheets of paper in half, and then open them again. On the left-hand side of the crease, tell children to complete this sentence: "Honesty means . . ." You could suggest: **Finish the sentence by describing an honest action, such as, "Honesty means telling your dad you broke the window," or "Honesty means not lying about homework you really didn't finish."** On the other side of the crease, have children draw a picture that illustrates their sentence.

When all children have finished, collect their sheets of paper. Assemble them into a book by following these steps:

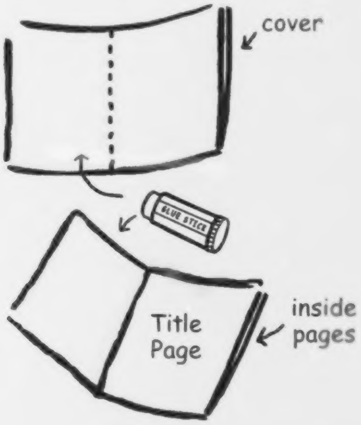
1. Glue the back of the illustrated half of one child's sheet to the back of the written half of another child's sheet. Then glue the back of the illustrated half of that sheet to the back of the written half of a third child's sheet. Continue until all of the children's sheets have been combined.



2. Make a title page for the front of the book. Fold a blank sheet of paper as before. Open it, and on the right-hand side of the fold write the name of the book, the name of the group or class, and the year. Glue it to the first child's page in the book.



3. Make a cover for the book by folding the piece of posterboard in half. Glue wallpaper or cloth over it if you wish, or ask a child to illustrate the front cover.
4. Position the book inside the cover so that a half-inch of space is left in front of the center fold to allow for the "binding." Glue the front half of the title page to the inside *front* cover of the book. Glue the back of the last page of the book to the inside *back* cover of the book.



Variation: If you prefer, assemble the book using a spiral binder, paper fasteners, staples, or a needle and thread.

A Skit About Honesty

Materials Needed
- Fables about honesty to read aloud (see leader's guide "Resources" on page 75)

Encourage children to use a fable they've already read or written as a script for a skit about honesty. Organize children into groups of three to five and allow time for them to meet together and plan their skit. Suggest that each child in the group may play a character's role, or that one child in the group may read the story as a narrator while the other children act it out. Allow them to perform the skit for the rest of the children. If you wish, have them perform their skits for other classes, for neighborhood groups, for their family, or in a gathering of their faith community. Explain that this is one way to teach others about honesty.

Conduct an Honesty Survey

Materials Needed
- Several copies of the "Honesty Survey" handout (leader's guide page 80) for each child

Encourage children to survey members of their family, class, or group to find out how honest they are about telling the truth and about not stealing. Explain: **When you do this kind of survey, people don't write their name. It's *anonymous,* which means no one knows what another person's answers are.** You might also say: **This is a very simple survey. You can't tell exactly how honest people are with this survey only—but it will give you a rough idea.** Have children give copies of the handout to the people they decide to survey. After everyone has filled out the surveys, they may return them to the child, who can then tally the answers to each question.

If you wish, have children bring their results to discuss with the rest of the group. For each question, ask children: **Why do you think a person would act this way? Is there a more honest way to act? Could you help someone change the way she or he chooses to behave? How?**

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed
- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

Aesop's Fables illustrated by Jacob Lawrence (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997). This book contains 23 of Aesop's fables. Each fable combines a moral lesson with an entertaining story.

10-Minute Life Lessons for Kids: 52 Fun and Simple Games and Activities to Teach Your Children Honesty, Trust, Love and Other Important Values by Jamie Miller (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998). This book encourages parents to teach the principles of honesty, trust, generosity, love, and other values. Children discover the objectives as they actively participate in the games and activities.

Character Building Blocks: The ABC's of Character . . . One Block at a Time
All About Character, Incorporated
PO Box 637
Pleasant Garden, NC 27313
1-888-256-2571
www.blocks1.com

This program uses wooden ABC blocks to help elementary-age children learn good character, values, and motivation.

6 Ways to Be an Honest Person

Hold on to the real you. Make sure your family, teachers, and friends know that you're genuine—always truthful about who you are.

Own up to mistakes that you make, even if you're afraid you'll get in trouble. Remember that lying leads to even more trouble.

Never keep silent when it's important to tell the truth. When you know about a lie and don't say anything, you're letting the lie live on. Turn a silent lie into a loud truth by speaking up.

Earn people's trust by keeping your promises to them and by never cheating or stealing. Take back anything you borrow, and never take anything without asking.

Stop and think about what really happened so you can tell it truthfully. Also think about what might happen if you *don't* tell the truth.

Tell your dad or mom, your teacher, or another adult you trust that you've made a promise to always tell the truth.

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6 Good Reasons to Tell the Truth

1. Telling the truth lets everyone know what really happened.
2. Telling the truth keeps people from being blamed for something they didn't do.
3. You usually get into less trouble when you tell the truth than when you get caught lying.
4. Your friends, family, and teachers will trust and respect you more if you tell the truth.
5. It's easier to tell the truth. You don't have to remember a bunch of lies to keep your story straight.
6. Telling the truth helps you to feel calm and peaceful inside.

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Honesty Test for TV Commercials

How honest are the commercials on TV? You be the judge—can they pass this honesty test?

1. Count the number of times the following "extreme" words are used. Put an X in the blank beside the word each time you hear it. Add other extreme words you hear, too.

____ **always**
____ **perfect**
____ ____________________

____ **only**
____ **greatest**
____ ____________________

____ **best**
____ **never**
____ ____________________

2. Do you believe that the product is as good as the announcer says?

____ **Yes** ____ **No**

3. Does the commercial say that an expert tested the product? If it does, write down who that expert is (a doctor, an athlete, a parent, a kid, and so on). Is it a person you can trust?

Who is the expert? ____
Is the expert trustworthy? ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

4. Does the commercial give you any warnings about its product?

____ **Yes** ____ **No**

If the commercial does give a warning, write what it is. If it doesn't give a warning and you think it should, write what it might have been.

Warning: ____

5. Is the commercial dishonest in any other way? If so, explain how.

____ **Yes** ____ **No**

Rate the honesty of the commercial. Check one of the following:

___ **Completely honest** (uses no extreme words, shows trustworthy experts, has warnings if it needs to)

___ **Partly dishonest** (uses one or two extreme words, shows experts you might be able to trust, has warnings if it needs to)

___ **Mostly dishonest** (uses more than two extreme words, shows untrustworthy experts or no experts at all, should use warnings but doesn't)

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Learn from Fables

Answer the questions below to discover what you can learn from fables.

1. **Write the name of a fable you read:** ______________________________

2. **How does this fable teach about honesty?**

____

____

____

3. **What other character traits does this fable teach about? How?**

____

____

____

4. **Do you think that this story is important for you now?**

________ **Yes** ________ **No**

Why or why not? ______________________________

5. **Do you think that fables were important for your grandfather or grandmother when they were your age?**

________ **Yes** ________ **No**

Why or why not? ______________________________

6. **After reading some fables, do you want to become more honest?**

________ **Yes** ________ **No**

Why or why not? ______________________________

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Honesty Survey

Check the best answer for each question.

1. How often do you tell the truth?

____ **Always** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never**

2. Do you take things that don't belong to you?

____ **Often** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never**

3. Do you try to be someone you're not? (example: pretending you own a certain toy when you really don't)

____ **Always** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never**

4. Do you do the things you say you'll do so that people can trust you?

____ **Always** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never**

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Lesson 8

RELATIONSHIPS

The main goal of this lesson is to help children learn about relationships with their family, their friends, and themselves. They discover a variety of ways to strengthen these relationships and make them more enjoyable.

Concepts

Forming and building bonds with family members, friends, and oneself

Being Your Best Chapter

"Relationships" (pages 90–106)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "7 Ways Families Can Build a Stronger Home" handout (leader's guide page 87)
- Copies of "6 Tips for Making and Keeping Friends" handout (leader's guide page 88)
- Copies of "7 Building Blocks for Strong Friendships" handout (leader's guide page 89)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 90–91 in *Being Your Best*. After reading, ask questions like:

- **What did Isaiah do that the older children were angry about? What did the children do next?**
- **Why do you think that the older children were so cruel? Why do people sometimes behave this way? What can be done to stop them? What can be done to help them?**
- **How did Zach show his love for his younger brother? Do you think that was a good solution? Why or why not?**
- **Why do you think the bullies ran away when they saw what Zach did?**

Relationship—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 92–93 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **Why do you think the mother gorilla protected the human boy?**
- **What is a *relationship?* Who do you have relationships with?**
- **What are three important kinds of relationships?**

How Can You Build Strong Relationships?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 93–103 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **Why is it important to have strong relationships? How does it help you? How does it help the people you have relationships with?**
- **What is a *family?* Who might be in a family?**

Give children copies of the "7 Ways Families Can Build a Stronger Home" handout and go over it together. Ask:

- **What are some ways a family can have fun together? How can a family work together? Why is it important to do these things?**
- **What is a *friend?* Why is it important to be a good friend?**

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Give children copies of the "Tips for Making and Keeping Friends" handout and go over it together. Ask:

- **What are some ways to make new friends? How can you be a better friend to the friends you already have?**
- **Why is it important to have a good relationship with yourself? How do you feel about being alone? What can you do to make your time alone more fun? What are some ways you can be your own best friend?**

Discuss the fact that it's okay to be either friendly or shy. These are differences—not things that are right or wrong. If children need help making friends, role-play or use puppets as a way of practicing this skill. Another way to guide children to form relationships is by getting them involved in activities where others share their interests.

Distribute the "7 Building Blocks for Strong Friendships" handout and go over it with children. As you read through it together, remind children that these building blocks work for all kinds of relationships: with family, friends, classmates, and even with oneself. As you read each step, ask children: **How can you use this building block in your family? How can this building block help you be a better friend to yourself?** Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on their closet door at home.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* page 104)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has four "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Relationships" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show a good relationship? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

While discussing the "What If?" scenarios, help children understand that relationships sometimes have problems. You might say: **Sometimes the problems are small. Maybe a friend said something that hurt your feelings. Maybe you and your brother are fighting over a toy.** Explain that problems like these can be solved with tools like "TALKS—5 Steps for Talking About a Problem" (leader's guide page 46). Then tell children: **Sometimes, though, problems in relationships are very serious. Maybe someone in your family hits or hurts you. Maybe a bully makes you afraid to walk home alone after school. If you're hurt or afraid, ask an adult you trust for help.** Explain that a list of helpful and trustworthy adults might include a teacher, a parent or another family member, a doctor, a school counselor, or a leader in your faith community.

NOTE: If you, as the adult leader, receive any disclosures of abuse from children, refer to the information on page 4 in the "Introduction" for guidelines on what to do.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **There's a boy at school who has lots of friends. You'd like to have him as a friend, too, but you're afraid to talk to him. You're scared he'll laugh at you or say that he doesn't want to be your friend. What are some ways you can show him you'd like to have him as your friend? How might you find the courage to ask him to be your friend?**
- **An older girl always teases you on the way home from school. She knocks things out of your hands. She pulls your hair and makes fun of you. What might you do to get her to stop? Should you avoid her to be safe? Or could you try to turn her into a friend? What can you do to improve this relationship? Can you think of an adult you might go to for help?**

Activities in the Children's Book

Plan a "Special Guest" Dinner

(*Being Your Best* pages 104–105)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Dinner Invitation" handout (leader's guide page 90)
- Copies of "Dinner Menu" handout (leader's guide page 91)
- Index cards or stiff paper
- Fine-line markers or pens
- *For Variation:* Tape recorder and cassette tape

Encourage children to talk to their families about inviting a few special guests for dinner. Or, as an alternative, invite guests for a dinner (or a breakfast or lunch, depending on what time of day you usually meet) with your entire class or group.

Together, brainstorm a guest list, using the "Dinner Invitation" handout. Encourage children to make name cards for each guest by folding index cards or heavy pieces of paper in half, and then writing the name of each guest on the front. If you wish, suggest that children write something nice about each person below the person's name.

Distribute copies of the "Dinner Menu" handout and allow children to brainstorm what they'd like to serve their guests.

Variation: If you'll be doing this activity as a class or group, plan which foods or treats children should bring in. Before the meal, encourage children to think of questions to ask their special guests. (If you wish, use a tape recorder to record the guests' answers or any stories they tell.) After the visit, ask children to write down something special that a guest may have said, or to role-play any stories the person may have told.

Surprise Someone

(*Being Your Best* page 105)

As a group, brainstorm kind actions children can do to surprise a family member or a friend. Ask children: **What are some kind things others have done for you? How could you surprise someone special?** Encourage children to come up with other ideas on their own; remind them that their good deed is meant to be a surprise! If you wish, have children practice writing a kind note to leave at the site of their good deed.

Variation: Ask each child in your class or group to write his or her name on a piece of paper. Collect all of the names and place them in a box or hat. Have each child draw a name and then plan a secret surprise for the person whose name was drawn.

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Go on a "Penny Ride"

(*Being Your Best* page 105)

Materials Needed

- A penny

You can do a version of this friendship activity outdoors or indoors at your school or meeting place by going on a "penny walk." Depending on the size of your group, divide the children into pairs or groups of three or four. Begin your walk in a certain direction. At each corner you reach, flip the penny to choose the next direction. If the penny comes up "heads," turn right at the corner. If it comes up "tails," turn left. Make sure every child gets at least one turn to flip the penny. In addition to helping children work together, this activity can help them develop a sense of direction.

Variation: Have children plan a destination (ice-cream shop, playground, and so on). After each turn flipping the penny, stop and allow children to refigure the route to their destination.

Start a "What Makes a Good Friend?" List

(*Being Your Best* pages 105–106)

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint) and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
- Writing paper and pens or pencils

As a group, brainstorm a list of the traits that a good friend has. Ask children: **What are some of the traits of your good friends? What are some traits you think you have?** Write these traits on chart paper or the chalkboard. Encourage children to write their own lists of the friendship traits that are the most meaningful to them. Have children circle the friendship traits they think they already have and put a check mark beside the ones they need to improve. Remind them to read their lists often to see which traits they should continue to work on.

Variation: Use your list of traits to make a poster for everyone to enjoy. Or, if you wish, have children write short poems using the "friendship words" on the list; hang these on the wall or bulletin board.

Additional Group Activities

"Make a New Friend" Role Play

Have children perform role plays showing how to meet and become friends with a new person in school, in their neighborhood, or at their place of worship. Ask children to brainstorm questions they could ask to learn more about a new person. Examples might include:

- "Hi! What's your name?"
- "Where did you live before? What was it like there?"
- "Do you have brothers or sisters?"
- "What games do you like to play?"
- "What else do you like to do?"

Encourage children to think of kind things they might do to form a relationship with a new person. For example, they could invite a new neighbor to play with them. Or they could show a new student around the school. They could even introduce the new person to other friends. After discussing these options, ask one child to play the role of a new person, and ask another child to be the one who's trying to make a new friend.

Friendship Cards

Materials Needed

- Construction paper
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Have children make cards to thank a friend or family member who has recently shown kindness. Encourage them to express how good they felt after

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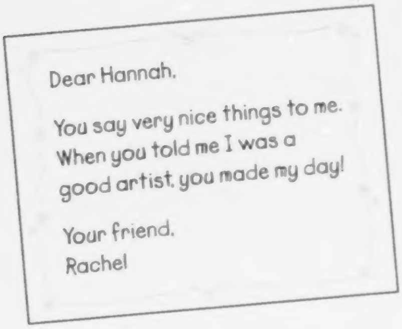
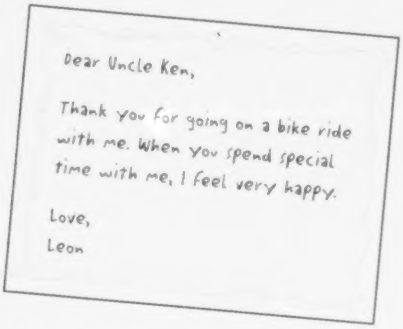
this person was kind. Children can decorate the cards any way they choose.



Dear Hannah,

You say very nice things to me. When you told me I was a good artist, you made my day!

Your friend,
Rachel



Dear Uncle Ken,

Thank you for going on a bike ride with me. When you spend special time with me, I feel very happy.

Love,
Leon

Compliments All Around

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- *For Variation:* Chalkboard and chalk

Ask everyone in your family, class, or group to sit in a circle. Give everyone a sheet of paper and have them write their names at the top. Next, have them pass their paper to the person on their right. Ask each person to write a compliment, or one nice thing, about the person whose name appears at the top of the page. Suggest examples such as: **Carlos is a fast runner. Terrel is generous—he shared candy with me. Samantha is kind to animals.** After writing one compliment, everyone can pass the papers to the right again. Continue this until everyone has had a chance to write on each person's paper. Allow time for people to read the compliments to themselves. If you wish, have everyone share a favorite compliment.

Variation: With younger children, read each child's name and have kids say nice things out loud. Write the compliments on the chalkboard if you wish.

Start a Friendship Club

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Friendship Club Purpose Statement" handout (leader's guide page 92)

Suggest that your class or group form a "Friendship Club." If you wish, divide children into smaller groups to be "branches" of the Friendship Club. Together, brainstorm things that the club members can do to show friendship toward one another and within their families and their community. Ideas may include reading stories to younger children, helping an elderly family member with chores, or performing a skit about friendship for their school or faith community. Use the "Friendship Club Purpose Statement" handout to help children choose the name of the club, the meeting place and times, the purpose of the club, and fun activities to do.

What Do You Like to Do When You're Alone?

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

As a group, have children name some of their favorite activities. Then ask: **Are there some things you enjoy doing all by yourself? What are they? Why do you enjoy them?** If you wish, suggest ideas like reading books, journaling, daydreaming, playing make-believe, or working on the computer. Then encourage children to draw a picture of themselves doing their favorite "alone-time" activity. When they're finished, ask them to share their artwork with the group. You may wish to say: **Although you can enjoy relationships with friends and**

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family, one of the most important relationships of all is the one you have with yourself.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

Good Friends Are Hard to Find: Help Your Child Find, Make and Keep Friends by Fred Frankel, Ph.D. (Pasadena, CA: Perspective Publishing, 1996). All children sometimes need help making friends or dealing with other kids. This step-by-step guide shows you how to help—and also offers concrete suggestions for dealing with teasing, bullying, and meanness, whether the child is the victim or the tormentor.

What to Do . . . When Kids Are Mean to Your Child: Real Solutions from Experts, Parents, and Kids by Elin McCoy (Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest, 1997). Kids of all ages suffer hurts that leave parents at a loss about what to do. This straightforward book provides the proven solutions parents have been looking for. Real-life vignettes and "quick reference" sidebars and boxes spell out successful strategies.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America
1230 W. Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
(404) 815-5700
www.bgca.org

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America's mission is to inspire young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to become productive, responsible, and caring citizens. More than 25 national programs are available in the areas of education, gang prevention, leadership development, athletics, and much more.

Boy Scouts of America
1325 W. Walnut Hill Lane
PO Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079
(972) 580-2000
www.bsa.scouting.org

The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America supports more than 300 local councils that provide quality youth programs, including Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing.

Girl Scouts of the USA
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018-2798
1-800-478-7248
www.girlscouts.org

The Girl Scouts of the USA is one of the largest organizations for girls, serving over 2.7 million girls around the globe through a five-level program that spans ages 5 to 17. Girl Scouting gives girls opportunities to build skills for lifetime success and to discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together.

7 Ways Families Can Build a Stronger Home

Find ways to have fun. Forgive each other when you need to, and face your problems together.

Accept each other the way you are.

Make rules together. Plan jobs and work together, too.

Include each other in the things you do.

Listen and talk together.

Improve together and grow.

Explore and play together.

Serve and support each other. Do kind things for each other.

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6 Tips for Making and Keeping Friends

1. Be accepting. Enjoy your friends for who they are.
2. Be a good listener.
3. Develop interest in others instead of talking only about yourself.
4. Be honest.
5. When there's work to be done, do your share.
6. Reach out to get to know new people. Don't always wait for someone else to take this first step.

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7 Building Blocks for Strong Friendships

Find out all you can about each other. Be friendly, fair, and forgiving.

Respect each other and act responsibly. Remember birthdays. Read together.

Include others. Share your interests. Imagine together.

Explore and enjoy things together.

Need each other. Be nice. Never lie or be unkind.

Depend on each other. Dare to dream and develop your interests together.

Share yourself, your family, and your friends with other people. Sing together. Smile.

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Dinner Invitation

Use this invitation as a sample to make your own. If you wish, cut out and use the blank invitation below.

COME TO OUR GRANDFATHER'S DINNER

Date May 16

Where Ana's home at 717 West Olive Lane

Time 6:00 P.M.

Given by Ana

Why? Because we love him.

Call me if you can come 555-8585

Blank invitation:

Date __________

Where __________

Time __________

Given by __________

Why? __________

Call me if you can come __________

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Dinner Invitation

Main dish (for example, fish, hamburgers, spaghetti):

____

Vegetables (for example, carrot or celery sticks, green salad, potatoes):

____

Fruits (for example, apples, oranges, watermelon, strawberries):

____

Extras (for example, rice, chips and salsa, olives, Jell-O):

____

Dessert (for example, ice cream, cupcakes, pudding, cookies):

____

Drink (for example, punch, juice, milk, water):

____

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Friendship Club Purpose Statement

Use this form to help you decide important things about your Friendship Club.

Name of the club: ______________________________

Meeting place: ______________________________

Meeting time: ______________________________

Adult sponsor (a teacher, a parent, or another adult):

____

Purpose of the club: ______________________________

____

Club activities: ______________________________

____

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Lesson 9

RESPECT

This lesson focuses on the meaning of respect. The children will explore ways to show respect for themselves and other people; for property; for laws, beliefs, and customs; and for nature and all living things.

Concepts

Courtesy, manners, assertiveness, politeness, appreciation of differences

Being Your Best Chapter

"Respect" (pages 107–119)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "7 Ways to Show Respect" handout (leader's guide page 99)
- Copies of "7 Ways to Speak Up When You Feel Disrespected" handout (leader's guide page 100)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 107–108 in *Being Your Best*. After reading, ask questions like:

- **Why did Sowon decide not to talk back to her mom after she made her friends go home?**
- **In what ways did Sowon show respect? To whom did she show respect? Why?**
- **How did showing respect help Sowon? How might it help others?**
- **How did her little brother show respect?**

Respect—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 109–110 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What is *respect*? How can you show respect?**
- **How did the teacher in this story lack respect? How did that make the author feel?**
- **How might the teacher have handled the situation in a more respectful way?**
- **What are some ways that someone might show *disrespect*? What are some things you can do when someone is disrespectful to you?**
- **How is respect a special kind of caring?**
- **Why is respect an important part of getting along with others?**

How Can You Show Respect?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 110–114 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What are some ways that you can show respect for yourself? For your body? For your feelings?**
- **How can you show respect for others? For differences in others?**
- **How can using good manners show respect?**
- **What are some ways that you can show respect for the world you live in?**

Give children copies of the "7 Ways to Show Respect" handout and go over it together. Ask:

- **How can you be respectful of property? Of animals and the earth? Of different beliefs, customs, and laws?**

Distribute the "7 Ways to Speak Up When You Feel Disrespected" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll

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see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on the closet door at home.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* page 116)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has three "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Respect" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show respect? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following two additional situations:

- **During a ball game, your ball goes into the neighbor's yard and mashes down some new flowers. When you go to get your ball, you see a "Keep Out" sign on your neighbor's lawn. Should you leave the ball there? Go get it? What might you do to show respect for your neighbor's yard? What might you do to show respect for yourself in this situation?**
- **A painter is painting some rooms in your home. When he's finished, you watch as he cleans his brushes. He warns you that the paint thinner he uses is poisonous, so you shouldn't touch it. Later, you see him start to dump the paint thinner onto the ground in the yard. Could there be a problem with this? If so, what might it be? What can you do to protect the environment? How might you speak up respectfully so that the painter will listen to you?**

Activities in the Children's Book

Throw Disrespectful Words in the Garbage

(*Being Your Best* pages 116–117)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Garbage Can" handout (leader's guide page 101)
- Pens or pencils
- Chart paper (such as newsprint) and markers

As a group, brainstorm a list of unkind words you've said to yourself or to others. Write the list on chart paper. You might say: **Words like these don't show respect. We hurt ourselves when we call ourselves these names. We hurt other people when we call them names. Words like these belong in the garbage, not in our heads or in our mouths.** Encourage children to write their own lists of unkind words on the "Garbage Can" handouts. After they've finished, ask them to tear up the sheets or crumple them up and throw them away in the recycling container. If you wish, begin a new list of words that *do* show respect. Be sure to emphasize that it's healthy to get rid of negative words—just like we take out the trash.

Variation: Draw a big garbage can on chart paper for your class or group to fill. Have each child contribute one or more

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unkind words. Each child may write the word on the garbage can, or just tell you what the word is so you can write it. (If you wish, talk about each word and discuss how it may be hurtful.) When you're done, take down the garbage can. As a group, crumple it up and throw it away—to take out the trash!

Practice Good Table Manners

(*Being Your Best* page 117)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Table Manners Magic" handout (leader's guide page 102)
- Books on table manners (see leader's guide "Resources" on page 98)
- Disposable cups, plates, napkins, and utensils

Using the guidelines in "Table Manners Magic" or another source, hold a table manners party in your class or group. If you wish, demonstrate setting a table, and then ask each child to follow your example to set her or his own place. Using simple foods (carrot sticks, peanut butter sandwiches, fruit salad, cupcakes) demonstrate and explain polite table manners to children. If you wish, go around the table and have children role-play good manners from the handout. Examples might include what to do when you're asked a question while your mouth is full, how to excuse yourself from the table, how to use a knife and a fork, and how to ask for items on the table using "Please" and "Thank you." Explain: **Manners are magic. When you eat politely, people will respect you more.**

Make a Respect Mobile

(*Being Your Best* pages 117–118)

Materials Needed

- Drawing paper
- Scissors
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Hole punch
- Wire or plastic coat hangers
- String
- *For Variation:* Glue, scissors, and magazines

Together with children, brainstorm some ways they can show respect in different settings, such as in their family, classroom, neighborhood, or faith community. Encourage children to select three or four ways that they show respect to people in these situations. Then have children cut sheets of drawing paper in half diagonally and illustrate their respectful actions on each half-sheet. Use a hole punch and string to attach the drawings to the coat hangers. Hang the finished mobiles from the ceiling in your classroom or group meeting place. Or encourage children to take their mobiles home to hang in their room, from a ceiling fan, or from a light fixture.

Variation: Make a customs-and-traditions mobile. Provide children with magazines showing different customs or traditions around the world. (If you wish, have children research other customs on their own to illustrate.) Encourage children to cut out pictures of different practices and traditions, glue them to their paper, and display them on coat hanger mobiles.

Make Family Respect Rules

(*Being Your Best* page 118)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Family Respect Rules" handout (leader's guide page 103)
- *For Variation:* Copies of "Group Respect Rules" handout (leader's guide page 104); chart paper

Give children copies of the "Family Respect Rules" handout and go over it together. Encourage them to hold a family meeting to talk about what it means to have rules on respect. (On pages 37–38 in *Being Your Best,* family meetings are introduced.) Families may decide which rules they'll use at home. Encourage children to ask their families to write the new rules on paper and display them where the whole family can see them—such as on a bulletin board, on the refrigerator, or on a family room wall. Another option is for families to make copies of the handout for each family member to keep.

Variation: Use the "Group Respect Rules" handout to brainstorm and choose respect rules to follow in your classroom or your group meeting place. Or make general respect rules that can be followed on the school bus, in the lunchroom, on the playground, at other people's homes, at the theater, at a sporting event, and so on. If you wish, divide children into small groups and give each group a copy of the handout. Allow each group to brainstorm what their respect rules should be. Have them present their ideas to the larger group. Together, discuss the ideas and vote on the rules. Write the final rules on chart paper and post them where everyone can see them.

Additional Group Activities

Respect Word Search

Materials Needed

- Paper and pens or pencils
- Scissors
- Graph paper

Invite children to create their own word searches. First, ask them to brainstorm a list of words that have to do with respect. (They may want to review the "Respect" chapter for ideas.) Or simply use the list below:

polite
customs
thank you
manners
rude
please
may I
differences
excuse me
turns
elders
respect

Next, tell children to write each word on a strip of paper just big enough for the word. Arrange each strip so that matching letters overlap. When all of the strips are laid out, have children copy the diagram on graph paper and fill in the extra spaces with random letters. (Remind them that the words can be placed up and down, across, or diagonally in the puzzle. They can even write the words backwards.)

If you wish, discuss the meanings of the respect words before children use them in the puzzle. When they're finished, make copies of the puzzles for children to share with each other. Don't forget to include a key listing the words that were used!

Variation: To take the activity a step further, encourage children to write some respect slogans or poems using the words they've found. Examples might include:

Don't forget respect!

Think about how you speak and act,
For what you do may someday come back.

"Please" and "Thank you" are our tools,
For in our group, politeness rules!

Play the "Gossip" Game

Materials Needed

- Paper and pencil

Have children sit in a circle. Ask one volunteer to think of a sentence, write it down, and then whisper it to the person sitting to the right. That person whispers what he or she heard to the next person on the right. Continue whispering the sentence around the circle.

When the sentence has gone all the way around the circle, ask the last child to say it out loud. Then have the first person read the actual sentence. Compare how much the sentence has changed. Ask children: **Do people always repeat stories exactly as they heard them? Do the facts sometimes get changed? Are people ever hurt when this happens?** Discuss what gossip is and how it can show disrespect for other people. Say: **Don't repeat stories that might hurt somebody. Talking behind a person's back isn't respectful. It's important to treat someone with respect—even if the person**

isn't right there. Together, brainstorm more ways to stop gossip before it starts.

Family Customs and Beliefs Bulletin Board

Materials Needed

- Drawing paper or chart paper (such as newsprint)
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, or paints
- Bulletin board

Ask each child in your class or group to tell about a favorite family custom; discuss the meaning of each one. Then have children individually draw their favorite custom on a sheet of paper, or work together to put all the customs on chart paper (for a mural). Point out the ways that many customs are similar or different. Ask children: **How can you show respect for customs that are different from yours?** Hang the individual drawings on a bulletin board, or display the mural. If you wish, hold a "Customs Show and Tell," encouraging children to bring in an object that's unique to their culture. Examples might include toys, ornaments, or special clothing.

Variation: Encourage children to try this activity at home. They can ask each family member to draw a picture showing his or her favorite custom, holiday tradition, or faith tradition—and then talk about why each one is important. Put all the pictures together where everyone can enjoy them.

What Should You Say?

As a group, talk about or role-play what you could say to show respect for yourself and for others in the following situations:

- **A friend tells you that you're stupid.**
- **A boy who's limping asks you if he can play soccer with you.**
- **A new girl comes to your class at school. She wears clothes that are special to her culture; they look different to you.**
- **A big, athletic boy tells you that you can't catch a ball.**
- **You come to breakfast wearing the outfit your mom picked for your school pictures. She smiles and says you look great, but you think you look dumb.**
- **An older woman shouts at you from her porch when you walk by. She sounds angry, but you can't really hear what she says.**
- **Your friend asks you if you like his new shirt. You don't.**
- **Your dad introduces you to his friend.**
- **Your friend throws a candy wrapper on the ground when you're out at recess.**
- **The principal shakes your hand, asks your name, and says, "How do you do?"**

Show Respect for the Environment

As a group, brainstorm actions that show respect for the environment. Then plan a simple activity based on children's suggestions. Ideas might include picking up trash on a playground, sorting recyclable materials, or helping with a neighborhood cleanup. If you wish, encourage children to think of activities that show respect for others as well as the earth (such as raking leaves or planting a tree as a favor to someone who's unable to work in his or her yard). Make sure children get appropriate permission before working on someone else's property.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

Social Smarts: Manners for Today's Kids by Elizabeth James and Carol Barkin (New York: Clarion Books, 1996). This book for ages 9–13 offers advice on how to handle all kinds of social situations and personal interactions—presented as letters from two eighth graders to a manners advice columnist, who advises on everything from formal etiquette to problems in interacting with classmates and family members.

Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem (Revised and Updated Edition) by Gershen Kaufman, Ph.D., Lev Raphael, Ph.D., and Pamela Espeland (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999). Simple words and real-life examples help kids ages 8–12 build self-respect, self-esteem, assertiveness skills, responsibility, and relationships. A teacher's guide is also available.

Goodcharacter.com
www.goodcharacter.com

This Web site is designed for teachers and others involved in character education. You'll find classroom discussion questions, student writing assignments, group activities, classroom tips and techniques, links to key character-education organizations, and more.

Live Wire Media
3450 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94118
1-800-359-5437
www.livewiremedia.com

Live Wire Media produces and distributes videos that help children become respectful, caring, responsible people who think critically, solve problems nonviolently, and make choices based on what's right instead of what they can "get away with." The "Proud to Be Polite" and "Respecting Others" series are useful for activities on manners and respect.

7 Ways to Show Respect

Reach out to others and learn about their beliefs and customs.

Enjoy the differences among people—they make life interesting!

Show respect for rules and laws by obeying them.

Put on your best manners. Speak politely, help people, and choose kind words.

Eat right, get plenty of sleep and exercise, learn healthy habits, and respect yourself.

Care about plants and animals and the air and water that living things need.

Treat property that belongs to you and other people carefully.

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7 Ways to Speak Up When You Feel Disrespected

Stay respectful even if you don't feel respected.

Plan what you're going to say—don't just say the first thing that comes into your head.

Earn respect by caring about everyone involved. Don't get rid of your hurt by hurting someone else.

Ask for the other side of the story. Get the facts straight.

Keep your comments short and clear.

Understand how the other person feels. Sometimes people say they're mad when they're really sad, jealous, hurt, or confused. Ask questions so you understand.

Practice good manners. Politely tell the person how you feel and what you need. Work together to find a solution.

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Garbage Can

Write all of the disrespectful words you can think of—mean or hurtful things you've said to other people or to yourself. Then put them where they belong: in the garbage can!

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Table Manners Magic

Use this sheet as a guide for practicing good table manners.

- Place your napkin on your lap.
- Use your fork, spoon, and knife, instead of eating with your fingers (unless you're eating "finger foods" like carrot or celery sticks, a cookie, or a sandwich).
- Chew with your mouth closed and eat quietly. Avoid slurping when you sip or smacking your lips when you chew.
- Remember not to talk with your mouth full. If someone asks you a question while you're eating, finish chewing and then swallow before you answer.
- Say "Please" and "Thank you" when you need something passed.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Don't bother other people or play with your food.
- When you're finished with your meal, politely ask, "May I please be excused?"

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Family Respect Rules

In our family, this is how we show respect . . .

For parents:

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

For children:

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

For brothers and sisters:

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

For other family members:

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

For ourselves:

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

For pets or other animals:

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

For things (property):

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

For beliefs and customs:

- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

Consequences for showing disrespect:

____

____

Rewards for showing respect:

____

____

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Group Respect Rules

In our group, this is how we show respect . . .

For the teacher or leader:

- ______________________________
- ______________________________
- ______________________________

For each other:

- ______________________________
- ______________________________
- ______________________________

For guests:

- ______________________________
- ______________________________
- ______________________________

For ourselves:

- ______________________________
- ______________________________
- ______________________________

For things (property):

- ______________________________
- ______________________________
- ______________________________

For rules and laws:

- ______________________________
- ______________________________
- ______________________________

For beliefs and customs:

- ______________________________
- ______________________________
- ______________________________

Consequences for showing disrespect:

____

____

Rewards for showing respect:

____

____

NICE GOAL, MIA!
THANKS, TYLER. NICE PASS!

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Lesson 10

RESPONSIBILITY

In this lesson, children learn ways to be responsible through their actions, words, thoughts, choices, and organizational skills.

Concepts

Making good decisions, accepting consequences, honoring commitments, being dependable

Being Your Best Chapter

"Responsibility" (pages 120–135)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "3 Steps in Making Good Choices" handout (leader's guide page 111)
- Copies of "How to Plan" handout (leader's guide page 112)
- Copies of "6 Ways to Make Responsible Choices" handout (leader's guide page 113)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 120–121 in *Being Your Best*. After reading, ask questions like:

- **What happened on the bus ride?**
- **How did Larry know what to do in this dangerous situation?**
- **In what ways was Larry a responsible person? In what ways did he help others at home?**
- **What do you think Larry's mom meant when she said, "He's always putting others before himself"? Why might that be a good thing to do?**
- **Larry's mom also said, "You can count on Larry." Why is it good to be a person others can count on? Who are some people you know you can count on? In what ways might people count on you?**

Responsibility—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 122–123 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What does it mean to be *responsible?* In what ways was the author responsible for Sir Blackie?**
- **What does *dependable* mean? How did Sir Blackie know the author was dependable? In what ways was Sir Blackie a dependable cat?**
- **Why do you think Sir Blackie trusted the author so much?**
- **Why is it important to be a responsible person? In what ways can you be responsible? How can you be responsible for *yourself?***
- **How might adults treat you if you're dependable and responsible?**

How Can You Be Responsible?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 123–130 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What do you think Tecumseh meant when he said, "I am the maker of my own fortune"? What does that have to do with responsibility?**
- **How can you be responsible by your actions? How can you show responsibility for the environment around you? For your belongings?**

- **How can you be responsible for your words? How might saying unkind things be *irresponsible?***
- **How can you be responsible in your thoughts? What can you do with the negative thoughts or ideas that come into your head?**
- **What bad choices did Seth make? Why do you think he made them? How did *not* taking responsibility affect Seth?**
- **What are *consequences?* How can thinking about consequences help you make good choices and be more responsible?**
- **What steps can you follow to make better choices? How can making good choices help you? How can it help others?**
- **What do you think the proverb "No choice is also a choice" means?**
- **Why is it good to be organized? What things can you do to be better organized?**

Distribute the "6 Ways to Make Responsible Choices" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on their closet door at home. Distribute and discuss "3 Steps in Making Good Choices" and "How to Plan." When discussing "3 Steps in Making Good Choices," encourage children to consider the *consequences* of any choice they make *before* they act on it. Children may wish to keep these handouts someplace where they can see them each day, as well.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* pages 130–131)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has three "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Responsibility" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show responsibility? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following three additional situations:

- **It's your job to feed the dog, but you're sick in bed. What should you do? Whose responsibility is it to see that the dog gets fed? What might be the consequences of getting out of bed? Of not feeding the dog? How might you take care of yourself and still be responsible?**
- **At soccer practice, your coach asks you to take care of the sack of soccer balls while he's out of town. The bag is big and bulky, and you know you're not going home right after practice. You give the bag to a friend and ask her to take care of it for you. She forgets to bring it to the next game, and there are no team balls at the game. Whose responsibility was it to get the soccer balls there? What could you have done differently?**
- **You go to a friend's house after school, and his parents aren't home yet. While looking in the refrigerator for a snack, you see some cans of beer. Your friend wants you to drink some. He says no one will find out, and that it won't hurt you to drink beer just once. You're afraid that**

your friend will make fun of you if you say no. What facts can you think of that might help you make your choice? What do you think is the right thing to do? How can you keep your friendship and still do the right thing?

Activities in the Children's Book

Make a "Who's Responsible?" Chart

(*Being Your Best* page 131)

Materials Needed

- Chart paper (such as newsprint)
- Marker
- Self-stick notes

Together, brainstorm tasks or jobs that need to be completed in the classroom or meeting place. (Or, if you prefer, list the steps that need to be taken to prepare for a specific event, such as a field trip or class party.) Write the words "What," "Who," and "Done" across the top of the chart paper. Underneath "What," write the job or task. As a group, decide who will be responsible for that task. Write the person's name on a self-stick note and place it in the "Who" column beside the task. Once that task has been completed, move the name to the "Done" column.

Variation: Use a similar chart to plan who will take responsibility for certain family tasks or events. You may also look in *Being Your Best* at "Make a Cooperative Chores Chart" on page 51 and "Make Family Chores Fair" on pages 61–62 for more ideas on dividing up family tasks.

Make a Choices Log

(*Being Your Best* page 132)

Materials Needed

- Notebooks and pens or pencils
- Copies of "Choices—Questions to Think About" handout (leader's guide page 114)
- *Optional:* Materials for decorating notebooks (such as paints, markers, colored pencils, pictures cut from magazines, glue sticks, ribbon, and stickers)

Ask children: **What are some choices you've made lately? What happened as a result of your choices? Do you think they were good choices or bad ones?** Allow children to recall choices as you suggest examples like: **What if someone makes fun of you during recess? What if your sister wants you to share your candy bar? What if your place of worship needs a volunteer to help with an upcoming event?** As a group, talk about the consequences of each suggested choice. Ask: **What might be the result of this choice? Is there a better choice to make here?**

After discussing a few examples, tell children they'll be keeping "Choices Logs." Explain that in these logs, they'll record choices they make each day. Pass out the notebooks and, if you wish, encourage children to decorate them. Next, distribute the "Choices—Questions to Think About" handout and go over it with the children.

Allow children five to ten minutes at the beginning or end of each day to record their choices. Encourage them to look at the questions on the handout as they consider what to write in their logs. Children may want to keep the handout inside their notebooks so they can refer to it often. Explain that, over time, children will be able to look back in their notebooks and see whether they've become better at making good choices.

Make Your Own Daily Planning Calendar

(*Being Your Best* pages 132–133)

Materials Needed

- Three-ring notebooks or cardboard binders with metal fasteners
- Labels and markers

- Twelve copies of "My Daily Plan" handout (leader's guide page 115) for each child
- Hole punch
- Pencils and erasers
- *Optional:* Materials to decorate the notebooks or binders (such as markers, ribbons, glitter glue, buttons, and other items)

To introduce this activity, ask children questions such as: **Why is it important to be organized? What might happen if you aren't organized?** Allow children to brainstorm answers. Next, review "Getting Organized" (*Being Your Best* pages 128–129) to explain four steps children can take to become more organized. You might say: **Being organized is an important part of being responsible. One way we can stay organized is by making a daily planning calendar.** Explain that, in a daily planning calendar, children can write down everything they need to do on a certain day. They can also look at their calendar often in order to remind themselves of their responsibilities.

Hand out copies of "My Daily Plan" and help children write in the days of each month. (If you wish, use a preprinted calendar as a guide.) Have each child write her or his name on a label and stick it to the front of their notebooks or binders, and then have children place their pages inside. Allow children to decorate their binders any way they like. If you wish, give children a small assignment or chore, with a specific due date, as the first item to write in their daily planners.

Volunteer with Your Club or Family

(*Being Your Best* page 133)

Materials Needed

- Chart paper and marker

Together, brainstorm possible volunteer activities children might do as a class or in their family, club, neighborhood, faith community, or town. To help them come up with ideas, ask: **Are there some things around the school or neighborhood that aren't being done, but should be? What project would be fun to do with your family or as a group?** Answers might include raking leaves or shoveling snow for a neighbor who's unable to, reading to someone in a nursing home, picking up litter in a park or along a road, or helping in the nursery at your place of worship. On a sheet of chart paper, write down all of the ideas and encourage each child to choose one to follow through with. (Make sure children speak with a parent before taking on one of these responsibilities.) To remember the task, children can write the activity in their daily planning calendar.

Variation: Plan a volunteer activity as a class or group. Together, brainstorm ideas and have children choose or vote on them. When they've chosen an activity, brainstorm the tasks involved and divide them among children. On a classroom chart, record each task and who will do it.

Additional Group Activities

Tutoring Club

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Tutoring Club Checklist" handout (leader's guide page 116)
- *Optional:* Posterboard and markers

Brainstorm how children might help other kids who need to develop skills. Explain that one way to do this is by *tutoring* others who need help in subjects children might be good at. Make it clear that when you tutor other students with homework, you don't give them the answers or do their work for them. Instead, you might sit with them to make sure their work gets done. You might explain things to them that they don't understand (if you *do* understand). You might even listen to them as they practice reading aloud to you.

Suggest to children that they take responsibility for helping other kids learn by setting up a tutoring club in your classroom or group meeting area. Hand out copies of the "Tutoring Club Checklist" and suggest that anyone who's interested can meet together during recess or a break, or after school, to begin planning the center's activities. Guide children as they develop and operate the tutoring club, encouraging them to think and plan the best way to support other kids by tutoring.

Variations: Designate a quiet corner of the room for the Tutoring Center. If you wish, set up a certain time of day when the center will be open. Be sure that it's a time when you, as the adult leader, will be able to step in to help the tutors (if they ask you) when they're unsure how to handle a homework problem. If you wish, have children role-play some tutoring scenarios first, to make them more comfortable with the responsibility of being a tutor. See the leader's guide "Resources" on page 110 for information on *Peer Pals,* a program for training older elementary students to be tutors to younger children.

A second variation is to have older children in your class or group teach younger ones a new craft, skill, or sport. Possible "tutoring sessions" might focus on how to throw a softball, knit, make play dough, or take a photograph. Encourage children to present their skill to the group as a demonstration or have them work one-on-one with another child.

Play the "What's Their Responsibility?" Game

Materials Needed

- Copies of the "What's Their Responsibility?" handout (leader's guide page 117)
- Pens or pencils

As a group, brainstorm a list of different people or jobs. If you prefer, follow the ones that appear on the "What's Their Responsibility?" handout. Explain to children: **We're going to use our list to play a game about responsibility. Each one of these people or jobs has many different responsibilities. You'll need to decide what they might be.** Divide children into two or more teams. Give each team the list of jobs, and tell them they have a set time limit (ten minutes, for example) to list four responsibilities for each of the different people or jobs. Encourage them to brainstorm together as a group. When the time is up, have a volunteer from each team read the responsibilities they came up with. You might want to point out the different answers each team provided, as a lead-in to a discussion about flexibility in gender roles, overlapping of responsibilities, and so on. If you wish, give a prize to the team with the most answers.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson. Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

Better than a Lemonade Stand: Small Business Ideas for Kids by Daryl Bernstein (Hillsboro, OR: Beyond Words Publishing, 1992). This book describes dozens of money-making ideas, including curb address painter, birthday party planner, dog walker, house checker, newsletter publisher, photographer, and sign maker. Daryl was 15 years old when he wrote and published this book for kids ages 8–15.

Kid Cash: Creative Money-Making Ideas by Joe Lamancusa (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: TAB Books, 1993). This book provides young people with dozens of creative ideas on earning money, samples of advertising flyers, and tips on what to charge for services, how to keep records, and how to handle money.

Peer Pals: Kids Helping Kids Succeed in School by Robert P. Bowman, Ph.D., and John N. Chanaca, Ed.D. (Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, 1994). A unique classroom program that trains students in grades 3–5 to tutor children in kindergarten–grade 2. Includes a teacher's guide; a lap easel storybook; puppets; audiocassettes with songs, cheers, and stories; worksheets; and a pattern for making wrist belts that children earn as they proceed through the tutoring process.

National Youth Leadership Council
1910 West County Road B
St. Paul, MN 55113
(651) 631-3672
www.nylc.org

The mission of the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) is to help young people take greater responsibility in their communities and schools through innovation in learning, service, leadership, and public policy. As one of America's most prominent advocates of service learning and youth service, the NYLC is at the forefront of efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy.

3 Steps in Making Good Choices

1. Think *before* you act.

2. Gather the facts.

3. Decide which choice is best for *you* and the right thing to do.

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How to Plan

1. Write a list of all the things you need to do.
2. Write down when each task needs to be done.
3. Write down the things you'll need to do each job.
4. Make a backup plan.

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6 Ways to Make Responsible Choices

Consider what might happen—think before you act.

Help yourself be responsible by getting and staying organized.

Obey rules and laws in your home, school, and community.

Ignore bad ideas that pop into your head. Change what you're doing or think about something good instead.

Choose the choice that's best for you and for others—the one that feels right inside.

Earn people's trust by showing that they can count on you.

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Choices—Questions to Think About

Use your "Choices Log" to keep track of times when you make choices. For each choice you write about in your log, think about these questions:

- **What happened?**
- **Did you make the right choice? Explain.**
- **If you did make the right choice, was it hard or easy? Why?**
- **If you didn't make the right choice, why did you choose as you did?**
- **How did you feel about the choice you made at the time you made it? How do you feel about the choice now?**
- **What did you learn that will help you in the future?**

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My Daily Plan

Month ____________________ Year ____________________

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

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Tutoring Club Checklist

Use this sheet to help you start a tutoring club. Be sure to check off all items before you begin.

____ **1.** We have asked permission of a parent, teacher, or club leader.

____ **2.** We have asked one of these adults to be our sponsor. (A sponsor is an adult who helps you.)

____ **3.** These are the supplies we'll need:

____

____

____

____

____ **4.** This is how we'll get them (how we'll pay for them, whether they'll be donated, whether our sponsor can help us get them):

____

____

____

____

____ **5.** These are the kids we have asked to help us tutor. They are members of our club:

____

____

____

____

____ **6.** We have planned a meeting with our tutors and our sponsor. We have told them the date, time, and place.

Date: ______________________

Time: ______________________

Place: ______________________

____ **7.** We have asked our sponsor to help us train our tutors and explain what they will do at the meeting.

____ **8.** This is how we'll advertise for people who need to be tutored (for example, asking teachers for names of students who need tutoring, making flyers for the neighborhood, etc.):

____

____

____

____

____ **9.** We have set the time and place for tutoring (for example, every day after school for one hour).

Date: ______________________

Time: ______________________

Place: ______________________

____ **10.** We have decided when the next meeting will be with our sponsor and tutors.

Date: ______________________

Time: ______________________

Place: ______________________

____ **11.** We have decided how long we'll tutor (days, weeks, months).

How long? ______________________

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What's Their Responsibility?

Can you name four responsibilities for each of the people on this list?

Father: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Mother: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Child: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Grandparent: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Principal: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Teacher: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Student: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Doctor: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Pilot: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Mail carrier: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Police officer: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Coach: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Artist: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Trash collector: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Friend: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Baby-sitter: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Zookeeper: ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Add your own:

____________ ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

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Lesson 11

SAFETY

The goal of this lesson is to teach ways to be safe, including knowledge of safety rules and guidelines, what to do in an emergency, and how to make good choices.

Concepts

Awareness, caution, action, prevention

Being Your Best Chapter

"Safety" (pages 136–152)

Reading Review

Materials Needed

- Copies of "6 Steps to Take in an Emergency" handout (leader's guide page 126)
- Copies of "6 Guidelines for Feeling and Being Safe" handout (leader's guide page 127)

The Story

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the story on pages 136–137 in *Being Your Best*. After reading, ask questions like:

- **Why were the Carlisle students so angry? Why do you think they decided to change what was happening at their school?**
- **What was the first step the students took to make kids safer? What else did they do? What happened as a result?**
- **How did the students' plan make the school a safer place? Can kids solve problems—even really big problems—when they work together? Why or why not?**
- **Can you think of a safety problem at your school or club, or in your family or neighborhood? What steps can you take to improve the situation?**

Safety—What Does It Mean?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 138–139 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **What did Teng do to help the drowning boy? How did he also keep himself safe?**
- **What does *safety* mean? What are some ways you can be safe in your home? At school? In your neighborhood?**
- **What might happen if you don't follow safety rules while swimming? On your bike or skateboard? In a car? While crossing the street?**
- **What can help you to feel safe indoors?**
- **How might having a cautious and careful attitude build character "muscles"?**

How Can You Be Safe?

Read or have a volunteer read aloud the text on pages 139–144 in *Being Your Best*. Ask children:

- **Why are safety rules important? How can they help you keep safe? What are the safety rules in your home, at your place of worship, and at school?**
- **If there are no safety rules in some of these places, can you make some? What rules would you make?**
- **What is an *emergency*? Why is it important to know what to do during one?**

Give children copies of the "6 Steps to Take in an Emergency" handout and go over it together. Ask:

- **What steps should you take in an emergency?**

If you wish, have children role-play emergency phone calls.

- **What are some choices you can make to keep yourself safe? To keep yourself healthy? Why is it important to make choices like these?**
- **How might violent games, movies, or TV shows make you feel unsafe? What choices can you make to feel safer?**
- **What is *instinct*? Can you think of a time when your instinct told you that you weren't safe? What did you do? What can you do if your instinct says you might be unsafe?**

Suggest different situations in which someone's instinct might "speak up": while playing sports, while walking home from school, when home alone, and so on.

Distribute the "6 Guidelines for Feeling and Being Safe" handout and go over it with children. Suggest that they keep the handout in a place where they'll see it each day, such as inside the top of their desk or on their closet door at home.

You may wish to tell children: **Sometimes, people in your home or at school can make you feel unsafe. Maybe someone in your family hits or hurts you. Maybe an adult you don't know well is scaring you. Maybe a bully or a gang makes you afraid to walk home alone after school. If you feel hurt or scared, ask an adult you trust for help.** Trustworthy adults might include a teacher, parent or other relative, doctor, school counselor, or leader in your faith community.

> **NOTE:** If you, as the adult leader, receive any disclosures of abuse from children, refer to the information on page 4 in the "Introduction" for guidelines on what to do.

Character Dilemmas

What If?

(*Being Your Best* pages 145–146)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do" handout (leader's guide page 20)

Before you discuss the "What If?" situations, distribute copies of "Guidelines for Deciding What to Do." Go over the guidelines and answer any questions.

Being Your Best has three "What If?" character dilemmas in the "Safety" chapter. Read or ask a volunteer to read one dilemma at a time. Discuss each situation, brainstorming different solutions and possible outcomes. How does (or doesn't) each solution show safety? When discussing outcomes, ask children questions such as: **Which solution could help the most people or things involved? Which would be the safest and show the most kindness? Which choice might help you feel the best, and why?** Point out that there's often more than one good solution to a dilemma. (In fact, the dilemmas have been designed so that they usually have more than one solution.)

Invite volunteers to role-play the situations. Following each role play, ask the players: **How did it feel to play your role? Was it hard to decide what choice to make? What did you have to think about?** Ask all children: **Do you think this solution was a good one? Why or why not?** Be sure to role-play different ways to solve each situation. Lead children to think of possible consequences of each choice.

If you wish, read, discuss, and role-play the following four additional situations:

- **You have a friend who never wears a bicycle helmet when he rides his bike. He makes fun of you when you wear one. Other kids think your friend is cool, and soon they start teasing you, too. What might you do to keep yourself safe? How might you encourage your friend to be safe, too?**
- **Your neighbor asks you to come over and help her with some yard work. You would help her husband rake leaves in the backyard while she plants some bulbs on the front lawn. She says she'll even pay you. You really want to help, but you always get a funny feeling around her husband. You don't know why. Your instinct seems to**

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tell you, "Don't be around him alone." Should you ignore this and take the job? Or should you pay attention to your instinct? Is there a way you could do both? Can a trusted adult help you decide?

- **A friend asks you to roast marshmallows with her and two other girls. She makes you promise to keep it a secret. You're excited to be included. All of you go behind your friend's apartment building in a large field with grass all around. You're worried that this might not be safe. Then one of the girls pulls out a cigarette and lights it. What dangers do you see? How could you help your friends see the dangers, too? What might you do to avoid the dangers? Is it more important to be trustworthy and loyal to your friend in this situation, or to be safe? Why?**
- **You're at your friend's, and no one is home but the two of you. Your friend wants to show you his dad's rifle. He says his dad has trained him how to use it. You don't think you should take the rifle out, and you say so. Your friend calls you a wimp. What might you do to make you both safe and also keep your friend? Is there a way to reach out to a trusted adult in this situation?**

Activities in the Children's Book

Make an Emergency Phone Number List

(*Being Your Best* page 146)

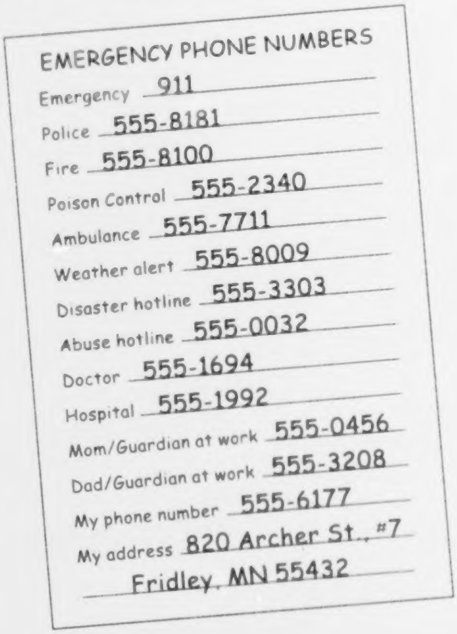
Materials Needed

- Copies of "Emergency Phone Numbers" handout (leader's guide page 128)
- Phone book
- Pens or pencils
- *Optional:* Index cards; clear plastic adhesive paper

Show children the phone book and say: **It's important for everyone to know where to call for help in emergencies. It's so important that the phone book has a special page where all of the emergency phone numbers for our area are listed.** Point out important numbers such as 911, the police, the fire department, the ambulance, and the Poison Control Center. Explain the difference between calling 911 and other numbers for help. You might say something like: **Call 911 when you need help RIGHT NOW. Call it if someone is hurt very badly, or if there's a fire or some other emergency. Don't call it if you just need some information or have a question. That's not an emergency. You can call the police and hospital numbers instead.** If you wish, explain to children what happens when they call 911.

Distribute copies of "Emergency Phone Numbers" handout. Read aloud each emergency number, so children can fill out their own list. (If you wish, double-check to make sure each child has copied the numbers correctly.) Encourage children to add other important numbers, such as parents' work numbers. Suggest that each child post the list in a place where everyone at home will see it. The best place is right by the phone.

Variation: Make an emergency phone number card. Have each child write down the important phone numbers on his or her index card. Laminate each one with plastic adhesive, for durability. Encourage children to carry the card at all times, for emergencies that may happen away from home.



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency 911
Police 555-8181
Fire 555-8100
Poison Control 555-2340
Ambulance 555-7711
Weather alert 555-8009
Disaster hotline 555-3303
Abuse hotline 555-0032
Doctor 555-1694
Hospital 555-1992
Mom/Guardian at work 555-0456
Dad/Guardian at work 555-3208
My phone number 555-6177
My address 820 Archer St., #7
Fridley, MN 55432

Do a Home Safety Check

(*Being Your Best* page 146)

Materials needed:

- Copies of "Home Safety Checklist" handout (leader's guide page 129)

Give children copies of the "Home Safety Checklist" to work on with their families. Encourage them to take safety tours of their own homes, filling in all of the questions on the handout with "Yes" or "No." Suggest that children request a family meeting to talk about what it means to have a safe home—and begin to change all the "No" responses to "Yes." (On pages 37–38 in *Being Your Best,* family meetings are introduced.) Safety tours can also include showing all family members where and how to shut off water, gas, and electricity; where to find fire extinguishers and how to use them; and where to find medical supplies.

Variation: Take a safety tour of your school or meeting place. As you walk through the building, make a list of all the safety features you see. These might include fire doors, fire escapes, smoke detectors, a sprinkler system, fire alarms, good lighting in hallways, posted safety rules, and a fire escape map. If you wish, ask a custodian, building superintendent, or another building official to show you safety features in places such as the furnace room, the kitchen, or the offices. After the tour, discuss the features on your list and why they're important. Ask children: **Can you think of any safety features that are missing? Were any broken or in bad shape? How can we have that changed?**

Make a Safety Flyer

(*Being Your Best* page 147)

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Pens, colored pencils, or fine-line markers
- Photocopy machine

As a class or group, decide on a safety topic to write about on your flyer. Consider a general topic, such as water safety, bike safety, or playground safety. Or, if you wish, pick a topic that's more specific, like fire safety in the home, or being safe while riding on the bus.

Once the group has chosen a topic, brainstorm safety tips and rules. If you wish to make a group flyer, write this list of rules on one piece of paper and make copies to hand out in children's homes, the school, or the neighborhood. Or have each child make his or her own flyer to hand out. If you prefer, divide children into small groups and have each group make their own flyer on a safety topic of their choice.

Variation: Make a "street-smart" safety flyer for staying safe on the way home from school or a group meeting—these can be handed out to other children, too. Include tips such as these:

- Listen to "gut" feelings of fear or danger. Get to a safe place quickly.
- Never walk alone. Always have a buddy with you.
- Always let a parent, guardian, or trusted adult know where you are.
- If someone in a car pulls up to you, just walk away. Don't talk to the person or get in the car—even if the person claims to know your mom or dad.
- If you walk after dark, make sure a responsible adult is with you.
- If someone follows you, walk toward a group of people or into the nearest business. Knock on the door of the nearest house or apartment.
- Scream if you're in danger. Yell for help!
- Always keep some quarters and dimes with you, so you can make a phone call if you need to.

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- Keep a card in your pocket that tells your name, address, and phone number. (If you're injured in an accident, the card will help someone know how to contact your family.)
- Keep your "Emergency Phone Numbers" card with you in case you need to make an emergency phone call.

Plan to Be Safe During a Disaster

(*Being Your Best* pages 147–148)

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Let's Be Ready!" handout (leader's guide page 130)
- Copies of "Family Disaster Readiness Survey" (leader's guide page 131)

Together, discuss what *disaster* means and name different types of disasters that may occur. If you wish, ask if any children present have ever been in a disaster. If so, ask a volunteer to explain what happened, what it was like, and if any preparations had been made ahead of time. Explain to children: **Disasters are often surprises. They come without much warning and can do a lot of damage. But if we prepare or if we know what to do ahead of time—even before a disaster is in sight—we can be safer.** Discuss what to do in the case of different types of disasters (example: get to the basement during a tornado).

Give each child a copy of "Let's Be Ready!" and brainstorm answers to each question. Explain: **This is how we can prepare for disasters ahead of time. By knowing the answers to these questions, we'll know what to do if a disaster hits.** Encourage children to keep the handout someplace where they can read it every so often to remind themselves of what to do.

Variation: Encourage children to hold a family meeting to go over the "Family Disaster Readiness Survey." (This could be part of the family safety tour described in the "Do a Home Safety Check" activity on leader's guide page 121.) Each family member should receive a copy of the survey. Families can discuss all of the questions, and then come up with answers as a group.

Additional Group Activities

"Being Street Smart" Coloring Book

Materials Needed

- Drawing paper
- Pens or black markers
- Photocopy machine
- Hole punch
- String or ribbon (to bind pages together)

Use the bulleted list of street-smart safety tips in the variation of the "Make a Safety Flyer" activity (leader's guide pages 121–122) to have children make a coloring book. This book may be photocopied and handed out to younger children in your school or group to teach them about safety skills. Before beginning the activity, encourage children to brainstorm other safety tips as well, such as: "Look both ways before crossing the street." "Keep your eyes and head up." "Be home before dark." "Never hitchhike." "Don't talk to strangers." "Know your neighborhood." Discuss the reasons why each of these tips can help kids be safer.

Next, ask each child to contribute one page to the coloring book. Children may choose a safety tip to illustrate; they should then draw only the *outline* of the picture (the rest is for someone else to color in). Children can then print the safety tip at the bottom of the illustrated page.

After children have turned in their pages, photocopy all of them to create multiple coloring books. Use a hole punch to make holes along the left edge of each book, and then bind the pages together using string or ribbon. Make enough coloring books to give to a group of younger children to color. Or donate copies of each coloring book to places like the school library, a local shelter, a clinic waiting room, a childcare center, a community group, or the nursery at your place of worship.

Variation: Have children make coloring books for a variety of other safety issues. If you wish, have children work together in small groups, with each group making a book for a different issue.

The "What Should You Do?" Game

Materials Needed

- Index cards
- Pens or fine-line markers
- Timer or watch

Together, brainstorm as many unsafe situations as you can. Have children write down the situations on index cards, encouraging them to start each one with: "What should you do if . . ." (Another option is to write each one on an index card yourself.)

Examples:

- What should you do if it's dark when you have to walk home from school?
- What should you do if you see someone get hurt in a bicycle accident?
- What should you do if you see that your garage is full of oily rags and old paint cans?
- What should you do if you see a gun lying on a table at your friend's home?
- What should you do if you're hiking, and you fall and twist your ankle?
- What should you do if you see a stranger following you in a car?
- What should you do if you're home alone, and someone knocks at the door?
- What should you do if someone on the phone asks you your name, but you don't know the person?

Divide children into two teams, Team A and Team B. Choose one of the index cards and read aloud the "What should you do?" question to Team A. The team then has one minute to think of a safety plan, earning one point for a correct answer. If the team can't come up with an answer, the question goes to Team B. If Team B thinks of a safety plan in one minute or less, *two* points are awarded. Continue playing in this manner, allowing each team a chance to answer a question from an index card. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Bicycle Safety Awareness

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Bicycle Helmet Survey" handout (leader's guide page 132)
- Paper or posterboard
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Cardboard box
- Sequins, buttons, ribbons, glue, or other materials for decorating

Encourage children to start a bicycle helmet safety program in your school, group meeting place, or community. The goal is to create flyers or posters that make people aware of the importance of wearing bike helmets.

Start by handing out plenty of copies of the "Bicycle Helmet Survey," so children can gather statistics about how many people in your school, meeting place, or neighborhood wear bicycle helmets. Children may pass out the surveys and give people a deadline for completing them (such as by the end of the day). As the surveys are being filled out, have children decorate a "collection" box that people can put their completed surveys in. Place the box in a central, easy-to-find area.

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Once the surveys are in, children can count the results. Ask: **How many people wear helmets? How many don't? Are boys or girls more likely to wear helmets? Which ages are more likely to wear helmets? Do any of these results surprise you? Why?** Help children convert the survey results into percentages. Have children make a poster showing the survey results. Post it in a place where everyone can see it. Or, present the results in an assembly or newsletter. Children may also use the statistics to create flyers or other posters. (Example: 65% of Kids Surveyed Wear Bike Helmets—Are You One of Them?) Children could even report the survey results to a community council and request a safety ordinance.

If you wish, have children write safety poems or slogans to include in their flyers or on their posters, or to teach other children in their school or neighborhood. Suggest they start with a line such as: "Bike safety means . . ."

Bike safety for me
Means I watch, wait, and see.
Bike safety for you
Means you do these things, too.

Variation: Have children plan a "bike safety" skit to perform for other classes, clubs, and groups. Or brainstorm other activities they could plan that would involve the community in the issue of bicycle helmet safety. For example, consider asking local bike shops, businesses, or your state safety department to donate helmets to kids who don't have them. Use your survey results to decide how many helmets could be donated.

Looking Ahead

Materials Needed

- Copies of "Building My Character Muscles" handout (leader's guide page 13)

Assign the character trait chapter for the next lesson (if you plan to review previous chapters, or if you're working on the sessions out of sequence). Distribute the "Building My Character Muscles" handout. Allow children to take extra copies of the handout if they want to work on more than one trait at a time. Ask children to put their names on their handouts and fill in the "muscle" they'll be working to build over the next week.

Resources

Keeping Your Children Safe: A Practical Guide for Parents by Bettie B. Youngs (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1992). In this highly personal book, the author offers a model for parenting that helps to foster the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of children.

Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children and Teenagers Safe (and Parents Sane) by Gavin De Becker (New York: Bantam Dell Books, 2000). This book emphasizes protecting children from violence by teaching them to become more aware of their own feelings of fear. The author stresses paying attention to and acting on intuition as a way to keep out of or to flee potentially dangerous situations.

The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute
4611 Seventh Street South
Arlington, VA 22204-1419
(703) 486-0100
www.helmets.org

Contact the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute for helmet-related safety statistics and for information on using and buying helmets, or organizing helmet programs.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1707
(202) 662-0600
www.safekids.org

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign's mission is to prevent the number one killer of children—unintentional injury. They work to educate adults and children, provide safety devices to families in need, and pass and strengthen laws to empower families and communities to protect children ages 14 and under. This is an excellent resource for factual and statistical information on a wide range of safety issues. The Web site provides links to several other safety organizations.

National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
1-800-621-7619
(630) 285-1121
www.nsc.org

The National Safety Council is a leading source of safety and health information in the United States. The Council's mission is to prevent unintentional injuries in the home, in the workplace, and in the community, and to promote occupational and environmental health and general wellness. The Web site provides articles, statistics, and additional resources and links.

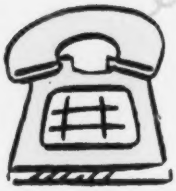
SafeKids.com
www.safekids.com

This site was created to offer kids a safe experience on the Internet and to provide parents and teachers with information on what they can do to help keep Web browsing safe. The site has several links for parents and teachers to find out more information, and many links for children to other appropriate sites on the Web.

Youth Crime Watch of America
9300 South Dadeland Boulevard,
Suite 100
Miami, FL 33156
(305) 670-2409
www.ycwa.org

Youth Crime Watch brings youth of all backgrounds together to identify and correct problems unique to their schools and communities. The program empowers youth to take an active role in addressing the problems around them and to take ownership of their own program for their school, neighborhood, public housing site, recreational center, or park.

6 Steps to Take in an Emergency



1. Stay calm.
2. Find a grown-up who can help right away.
3. If you can't find a trusted adult, call "9-1-1" or dial "0" for the operator.
4. Tell the problem to the person on the phone. Tell it as clearly and briefly as you can.
5. Tell the person your full name and the address or place you're calling from.
6. Stay on the phone to answer and ask questions and to get more instructions.

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6 Guidelines for Feeling and Being Safe

Stick to safety rules at school, on the bus, on the street, at home, and in sports and other activities. Stay away from dangerous things like drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, matches, fireworks, knives, and guns. Never touch any of these things if an adult isn't there.

Ask a trusted adult to help you if you see something dangerous or if you don't feel safe.

Feel safe inside by following safety rules, being careful, knowing what to do in an emergency, and making safe choices.

Encourage your friends to be safe, too. Stick to what you know is right even if friends tease you or try to change your mind.

Trust your instinct. Listen to the voice inside you that says something isn't right.

Yell for help if you're in danger.

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Emergency Phone Numbers

Who or what	**Phone number**
Local emergency number	
Fire department	
Police	
Poison control	
Disaster hotline	
Abuse hotline	
Doctor	
Ambulance	
Mom's/Dad's/ Guardian's work number	
Other relative or friend:	
Neighbor:	
Weather alert	
Power company	
Veterinarian	
Other numbers:	

Our phone number(s):

Our address:

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Home Safety Checklist

Please check for dangers in your home. Make changes for each item checked "No."

Yes **No**

_____ _____ There are smoke detectors in bedrooms, kitchen, furnace room.

_____ _____ There are fire extinguishers on each floor and by the cooktop.

_____ _____ There are carbon monoxide detectors on each floor.

_____ _____ There are no electrical cords under rugs.

_____ _____ Wall plugs are not overloaded with many cords plugged in.

_____ _____ Paints, thinners, turpentine, and other flammable things are in closed, airtight containers.

_____ _____ Matches and lighters are safely stored out of reach of small children.

_____ _____ There are no oily, greasy rags lying around. These are placed in cans or jars with lids.

_____ _____ Pesticides and herbicides are in child- and animal-proof containers.

_____ _____ Cleaning fluids are out of reach of small children.

_____ _____ Guns are unloaded and are locked. Only adults have keys to gun storage cabinet.

_____ _____ Ammunition is stored separately. Only adults have access to key.

_____ _____ Fireworks are safely stored under lock and key. Only adults have access to key.

_____ _____ Furnaces and water heaters are checked each year.

_____ _____ Furnaces and water heaters are strapped down so that they cannot move around.

_____ _____ Medicines are out of reach of small children.

_____ _____ Medicines are stored in childproof containers.

_____ _____ Rugs are fastened down tightly.

_____ _____ All outside doors have deadbolts.

_____ _____ Windows can be locked shut.

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Let's Be Ready!

Disaster we want to be ready for:

(*examples:* tornado, flood, earthquake)

How will we know it is happening or will happen?
(*examples:* siren will sound, message will come on TV or radio)

Where should we go to be safe? What should we do there?
(*examples:* meet in cellar, gather on sidewalk in front of building)

What food or supplies should we have on hand?
(*examples:* water, cereal, radio, flashlight)

How will we know the disaster is over?
(*examples:* radio will say, "all clear" signal will sound)

What should we do to be safe after the disaster?
(*examples:* stay away from downed power lines, wait for parent before returning home)

DO's and DON'Ts during this disaster:
(*examples:* DO go to the hallway, DON'T stand near windows)

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Family Disaster Readiness Survey

Check (✓) the things your family has done.

_____ We have a fire escape plan.

_____ We have a plan for taking shelter during disasters.

_____ We have a disaster meeting place (such as the driveway), so we can tell where everyone is if a disaster hits.

_____ Family members know how and where to turn off gas, water, and electricity.

_____ We have emergency water stored in our home.

_____ We have emergency food supplies in our home.

_____ We have emergency medical supplies in our home.

_____ Family members have been trained in first aid.

_____ We have emergency numbers posted by our phones.

_____ We have an emergency kit (with supplies of food, water, matches, tools, clothing, blankets, and medicine) near a door, ready to go.

_____ We have a radio and extra batteries.

_____ We have flashlights, candles, or kerosene lamps and fluid.

_____ We have a camp stove and safely stored fuel.

_____ We have a shovel and other tools.

_____ We have a cell phone with batteries (optional).

_____ We have a power generator (optional).

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Bicycle Helmet Survey

Please check (✔) the right answers. Then write your age.

1. Do you wear a bicycle helmet when you bike?

____ I wear a bicycle helmet whenever I ride.

____ I sometimes wear a bicycle helmet when I ride, but not always.

____ I never wear a bicycle helmet.

2. ____ I am a girl.

____ I am a boy.

3. I am ______ years old.

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About the Author

Barbara A. Lewis is a national award-winning author and educator who teaches kids how to think and solve real problems. Her students at Jackson Elementary in Salt Lake City, Utah, worked to clean up dangerous waste, improve sidewalks, plant thousands of trees, and fight crime. They lobbied and pushed through several laws in the Utah legislature and an amendment to a national law. The kids have earned many national awards, including two President's Environmental Youth Awards, the Arbor Day Award, the Renew America Award, and the A Pledge and a Promise Environmental Award.

Stories about Barbara and her work have appeared in many national newspapers, magazines, and news programs, including *Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, Family Circle,* "CBS This Morning," "CBS World News," and CNN. She has also written many articles and short stories for national magazines. Barbara's other books for Free Spirit Publishing include *Being Your Best, What Do You Stand For?, The Kid's Guide to Social Action, Kids with Courage,* and *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects.* Her books have won Parenting's Reading-Magic Award and have been named "Best of the Best for Children" by the American Library Association, among other honors.

Barbara has lived in Indiana, New Jersey, Switzerland, and Belgium. She is currently the Coordinator for PATHS (Program for Academically Talented and High-Achieving Students) in the Park City School District. She and her husband Larry live in Park City, Utah. They have five great children: Mike and his wife Michelle (the M & M's), Little Roo (the horse expert), Christian (the Pooker), and Samuel (the Lamanite). They also have four *grand*children: Jordie, Skyler, Drew, and Adam. The family also includes a pet squirrel who rules the deck in their backyard, several "deer" friends, a few bossy raccoons, and a forest of jays, magpies, finches, hummingbirds, and other feathered friends.

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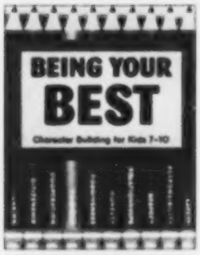

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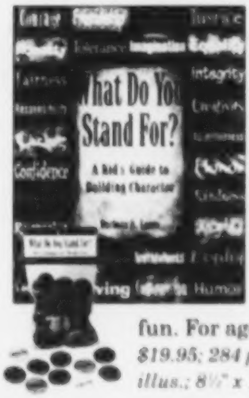

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Barbara A. Lewis is a national award-winning author and educator who teaches kids how to think and solve real problems. She lives and works in Park City, Utah.

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